



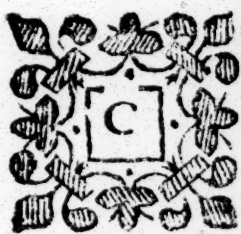
Lud. Frid. Jauchii.

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EX
BIBLIOTHECA
REGIA ACADEM.
GEORGIAE
AUG.

To the Reader.



Christianity is the life of the soul, and Meditation is the life of Christianitie: a pious man hath alwayes God within him, but he onely that meditateth findeth him there: every religious soul affordeth God a lodging, but he onely that meditateth conferreth with him & giveth the entertainment. Now therefore if thou desirest to talk with God, and enter a dayly Dialogue with thy Creatour, reader his Book, here is conference upon all occasions: reade this Authour, so well approved of, that he now by so many severall Translations speaketh more tongues, then ever spake Christ: for he is translated into the Turkish; you see what virtue the merit of this work carrieth with it, when the Imitation of Christ shall be prized by Christs enemies. A Merchant going to

Algiers in Mauritania to redeem
some captives from their misera-
ble slavery, found this Authour
transluted, and by the King won-
derfully enriched with pearls, and
kept (as he saith) in a more glo-
rious Cabinet then ever Alexan-
der kept his Homer in : sure the
power of his worth must needs be
great, that it could force a pet-
tie king to vanquish the Monarch
of the world. Reader, in brief,
take this Thomas à Kempis;
dead, yet still a learner of new
languages; this blessed and un-
confused Babel, who buildeth
men not stones up to heaven.
Take this Follower of Christ;
thy example; Gods familiar
friend and acquaintance; who
whilst he lived on earth, I say not,
He dwelt in Heaven, but more,
Heaven it self, nay God dwelt in
Him.

The

The Contents of the Chapters.

The first Book.

OF the imitation of Christ, and contempt of all worldly vani- ties.	Chap. 1
Of the humble conceit of our selves.	2
Of the doctrine of Truth.	3
Of wisdom and providence in our actions.	4
Of the reading of holy Scriptures.	5
Of inordinate desires, and affecti- ons.	6
Of flying vain hope and pride.	7
That too much familiarity is to be shunned.	8
Of obedience and subjection.	9
Of the avoiding superfluity in words.	10
Of the obtaining of peace, and zeal of spirituall profit.	11
Of the profit of adversity.	12
Of resisting temptations.	13
Of avoiding rash judgement.	14
Of works done of Charity.	15
Of bearing with the defects of others.	16

The Contents.

Of Religious life.	17
Of the examples of the holy Fathers.	18
Of the exercise of a religious person.	19
Of the love of solitude & silence.	20
Of compunction of heart.	21
Of the consideration of humane misery.	22
Of the meditation of Death.	23
Of judgement, and punishment of sinne.	24
Of the zealous amendment of our life.	25

The second Book.

OF spirituall conversation.	1
Of humble submission.	2
Of a good and peaceable man.	3
Of a pure mind, and upright intention.	4
Of the consideration of ones self.	5
Of the comfort of a good conscience.	6
Of the love of Jesus above all things.	7
Of familiar conversation with Jesus.	8
Of	

The Contents.

Of the want of all comfort.	9
Of thankfulness for the grace of God.	10
How few the lovers of Christs Crosse are.	11
Of the high way of the holy Crosse.	12

The third Book.

OF the inward speech of Christ unto a faithfull soul.	1
That truth speaketh inwardly with- out noise of words.	2
That the words of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.	3
That we ought to live in truth and humility in the sight of God.	4
Of the wonderfull effect of divine grace.	5
Of the proof of a true Lover.	6
That grace is to be hid under the veil of humility.	7
Of a mean conceit of our selves in the sight of God.	8
That all things are to be referred unto God, as unto the last end.	9
That despising the world, it is sweet	

The Contents.

- to serve God. 10
- That the desires of our heart are to
be examined and moderated. 11
- Of the effect of patience, and of
strife against concupiscence. 12
- Of the humble obedience of a sub-
ject according to the example of
Christ. 13
- Of the secret judgements of God
to be considered, lest we be ex-
rolled in our good deeds. 14
- What we ought to do and say in e-
very thing we desire. 15
- That true comfort is to be sought in
God alone. 16
- That all our care is to be placed in
God. 17
- That temporall miseries by the ex-
ample of Christ, must be borne
patiently. 18
- Of suffering of injuries: and who
is proved to be truly patient. 19
- Of the acknowledging of our own
infirmities: and of the miseries
of this life. 20
- That we are to rest in God above
all his gifts. 21
- Of

The Contents.

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God. 22

Of four things that bring much peace. 23

Of flying curious inquiry of the life of others. 24

Wherein the firm peace of the heart and true profit consisteth, 25

Of the excellency of a free mind, which humble prayer better deserveth then reading. 26

That private love most hindereth from the chiefest Good. 27

Against the tongue of Slanderers. 28

How we ought to call upon God, and blesse him when tribulation draweth near. 29

Of craving the divine aid, and confidence of recovering grace. 30

Of the contempt of all creatures, to find our Creatour. 31

Of deniall of our selves, and forsaking all our affections. 32

Of constancy of heart, and of directing our finall intentions unto God. 33

The Contents.

- That God is sweet above all things,
and in all things, to him that
loveth* 34
- That there is no securitie from tem-
ptation in this life.* 35
- Against the vain judgements of
men.* 36
- Of a full and pure resignation of
our selves, for the obtaining
freedome of heart.* 37
- Of good government in outward
things, and of recourse to God
in dangers.* 38
- That a man be not over-earnest in
his affairs.* 39
- That man hath no good of himself,
nor any thing whercof he can
glory.* 40
- Of the contempt of all temporall
honours.* 41
- That our peace is not to be placed in
men.* 42
- Against vain and secular know-
ledge.* 43
- Of not drawing outward things to
our selves.* 44
- That credit is not to be given to all
men:*

The Contents.

- men: and how prone man is to
offend in words. 45
- Of putting our trust in God when
evil words arise. 46
- That all grievous things are to be
endured for life everlasting. 47
- Of the everlasting day, and short-
nesse of this life. 48
- Of the desires of everlasting life,
and how great rewards are pro-
mised to those that fight valiant-
ly. 49
- How a desolate person ought to of-
fer himself into the hands of
God. 50
- That a man ought to imploy himself
in works of Humility, when
strength is wanting for higher
employments. 51
- That a man ought to esteem himself
unworthy of comfort, but rather
to deserve stripes. 52
- That the grace of God is not given
to those that savour of earthly
things. 53
- Of the different motions of Nature
and Grace. 54
- Of

The Contents.

Of the corruption of Nature, and
efficacy of diuine Grace. 55

That we ought to deny our selves,
and imitate Christ by the Crosse. 56

That a man be not too much dejected,
when he falleth into some defects. 57

Of not searching into high matters,
and into the secret judgements
of God. 58

That all our hope and trust is to be
fixed in God alone. 59

The fourth Book.

With how great reverence Christ
ought to be receiued 1

That great goodnesse and charity of
God is bestowed on man, in this
Sacrament. 2

That it is profitable to communicate
often. 3

That many benefits are bestowed
upon them that communicate deu-
outly. 4

Of the dignity of this Sacrament,
and Ministeriall function. 5

An

The Contents.

- An Interrogation of the exercise
before Communion. 6
- Of the discussing of our own con-
science, and purpose of amend-
ment. 7
- Of the oblation of Christ on the
Crosse, and resignation of our
selves. 8
- That we ought to offer up our selves
and all that is ours unto God, and
to pray for all. 9
- That the holy Communion is not
lightly to be forborn. 10
- That the Body of Christ and the
holy Scriptures, are most neces-
sary unto a faithfull soul. 11
- That he who is to communicate
ought to prepare himself with
great diligence. 12
- That a devout soul ought to desire
with her whole heart to be uni-
ted unto Christ in the Sacra-
ment. 13
- Of the fervent desire of some de-
vout persons to receive the Body
of Christ. 14
- That the grace of devotion is ob-
tained

The Contents.

- tained by humility and deniall
of our selves. 15*
- That we ought to manifest our ne-
cessities to Christ, and crave his
grace 16*
- Of fervent love, and vehement de-
sire to receive Christ. 17*
- That man be not a curious searcher
of this Sacrament, but an hum-
ble follower of Christ, submit-
ting his sense to faith. 18*
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THE

THE FIRST BOOK.

CHAP. I.

Of the imitation of Christ, and contempt of all worldly vanities.



HE that followeth me, walketh not in darknesse, saith our Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are admonished, that we ought to imitate his life and manners, if we will be partakers of his Divine light, and be delivered from all blindnesse of heart. Let therefore our chiefest care be to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ.

2. The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all humane doctrine, and he that hath the light of the Spirit, will discover therein a secret and hidden Manna. But it falleth out, that many, who often hear the Gospel of Christ, do yet feel in themselves but slender motion of any holy desire, because they are
void

void of the spirit of Christ. But whosoever will fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ, must endeavour to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ.

3. What will it avail thee to dispute profoundly of the Trinity, if thou be void of humility, and thereby displeasing to the Trinity! High words surely make a man neither holy nor just, but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God. I had rather feel compunction, then understand the definition thereof. If thou didst know the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the Philosophers, what would all that profit thee without charity and the grace of God? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but onely to love God, and wholly to serve him. This is the highest wisdom, by contempt of the world to tend towards the kingdome of heaven.

4. It is therefore vanity to seek after fading riches, and to repose
trust

trust in them. It is also vanity to gape after honours, and to climbe to high degree. It is vanity to follow the appetire of the flesh, and to labour for that, for which thou maist afterwards suffer more grievous punishment. Vanity it is to wish to live long, and to be carelesse to live well. It is vanity to mind onely this present life, and not to foresee those things which are to come. It is vanity to set thy love on that which speedily passeth away, and not to hasten thither, where everlasting joy is permanent.

5. Call often to mind this proverb, That the eye is never satisfied with seeing nor the ear filled with hearing. Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy heart from the affection of visible things, and to turn thy self to the invihble. For they that follow their sensuality, do strain their own consciences, and lose the grace of God.

CHAP. II.

*Of the humble conceit of
our selves.*

ALl men by nature desire to know: but what availeth knowledge without the fear of God? Surely, an humble husbandman that feareth God, is better then a proud Philosopher that neglecting himself laboureth to understand the course of the heavens. Who so knoweth himself well, groweth dayly more contemptible in his own conceit, and delighteth not in the praises of men. If I understood all that is to be known in the world and were not in charity, what would that help me in the sight of God, who will judge me according to my deeds.

2. Give not thy self to inordinate desire of knowledge, for therein is much distraction and deceit. The learned are willing to seem so to others, and to be accounted wise. There be many things, which to know doth little or nothing profit

fit the soul : and he is very unwise that bestowerh his labour about other things then those that may avail him for the health of his soul. Many words do not satisfie the desires of the heart:but a good life comforteth the mind, and a pure conscience giveth great assurance in the sight of God.

3. How much the more thou knowest, and how much the better thou understandest, so much the more grievously shalt thou therefore be judged, unlesse thy life be also more holy. Be not therefore extolled in thine own mind for any Art or Science which thou knowest : but rather let the knowledge given thee make thee more faithfull. If thou thinkest that thou understandest and kuowest much; know also that there be many things more which thou knowest not. Think not too well of thy self, but rather confesse thine ignorance. Why wilt thou preferre thy self before others, sith there be
ma-

many more learned and skilfull then thou? If thou wilt know or learn any thing profitable, desire not to be known, and to be little esteemed of by man.

4. The highest and most profitable reading is the true knowledge and consideration of our selves. It is great wisdom and perfection to esteem nothing of our selves, and to think alwayes well and commendably of others. If thou shouldst see another openly sinne, or commit any hainous offence, yet oughtest thou not to esteem the better of thy self: for thou knowest not how long thou shalt be able to remain in good estate. We are all frail, but thou oughtest to esteem none more frail then thy self.

CHAP. III.

Of the doctrine of Truth.

HAppy is he whom Truth by it self doth teach, not by figures and voices that passe away; but as
it

it is in it self. Our own opinion & sence do often deceive us, and it discerns little. What availeth it to dispute and contend about dark and hidden things ; whereas for being ignorant of them we shall not so much as once be reprehended at the day of judgement : It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable and necessary, and give our minds to that which is curious and hurtfull : we have eyes and see not.

2. And what have we to do with the terms and distinctions of Logicians ? He to whom the Eternall Word speaketh is delivered from multitudes and diversities of opinions. By that one Word all things do speak, and all declare the same : and this is the beginning, and that which speaketh unto us. No man without that Word understandeth or judgeth rightly. He to whom all things are one, and seeth all things in one, may enjoy a quiet mind, and remain
peaceable

peaceable in God. O God, thy eternall Truth makes me one with thee in everlasting charity. It is tedious to me often to reade and hear many things. In thee is all that I would have and can desire. Let all Doctours hold their peace; let all creatures be silent in thy sight: speak thou alone unto me.

3. How much the more one is retired within himself, and becometh inwardly sincere, and pure, so much the more and higher mysteries doth he understand without labour: for that he receiveth light of understanding from above. A pure, sincere, and staid spirit is not distracted, though it be employed in many works: for that it works all to the honour of God, and labours for inward tranquillity, without seeking it self in any thing it doth. Who hinders and troubles thee more then the unmortified desires of thine own heart? A good and godly man first of all disposeth in himself his
outward

outward works : neither do they draw him to the desires of an inordinate inclination , but he ordereth them to the prescript of reason. Who hath a greater combat, then he that laboureth to overcome himself ? This ought to be our endeavour , to conquer our selves dayly, to wax stronger, and be more able to subdue our passions, and alwayes in this way to get some ground.

4. All perfection in this hath some imperfections mixt with it: and no knowledge of ours is void of darknesse and ignorance. An humble knowledge of thy self is a more secure way to God, then a deep search after learning : yet learning is not to be blamed, nor the onely knowledge of any thing whatsoever is to be disliked, it being good in it self, and ordained by God; but a good conscience and a virtuous life is to be preferred before it. And for that many endeavour rather to get knowledge,
then

then to live well; therefore they are often deceived, and reap either none or very slender profit of their labours.

5. O, if men bestowed as much labour in the rooting out of vices, and planting of virtues, as they do in moving doubts and questions! neither would there so much hurt be done, nor so great scandall be given in the world, nor so much loosenesse be practiced in places erected for virtue. Truly at the day of judgement we shall not be examined what we have read, but what we have done: not how well we have spoken, but how virtuously we have lived. Tell me now, where are all those great Doctors and Masters with whom thou wast well acquainted, whilst they lived and flourished in learning? Now others possesse their livings, and perhaps do scarce ever think of them. In their life time they seemed something, but now they are not spoken of.

6. O,

6. O, how quickly doth the glory of this world passe away! Would God their life had been answerable to their learning, then had their study and reading been to good purpose. How many perish in this world by reason of vain learning, who take little care of the service of God? And because they rather choose to be great then humble, therefore they vanish away in their vain imaginations. He is truly great that is great in charity. He is truly great that is little in himself, and that maketh no account of the height of honour. He is truly wise, that accounteth all earthly things as dung, that he may gain Christ. And he is truly learned, that fulfilleth the will of Christ, and forsaketh his own.

CHAP. IV.

*Of wisdom and providence in
our actions.*

WE must not give eare to every
suggestion or instinct, but
B ought

ought warily and leisurely to ponder things according to the will of God. But (alas !) such is our weaknesse that we rather often believe, and speak evil of others then good. Those that are perfectly virtuous do not easily give credit to every thing that is told them ; for they know that humane frailty is prone to evil, and very subject to fail in words.

2. It is great wisdom not to be rash in thy proceedings, nor to stand stiffely in thine own conceits; as also not to believe every thing which thou hearest, nor presently to relate again to others, what thou hast heard or dost believe. Consult with him that is wise, and of a good conscience, and seek to be instructed by a better then thy self, rather then to follow thine own inventions. A good life maketh a man wise according to God, and giveth him experience in many things. How much the humbler one is in himself, and more subject and resigned unto God

God; so much the more prudent shall he be in all his affairs, and enjoy greater peace and quiet of heart.

CHAP. V.

Of the reading of holy Scriptures.

TRuth, not eloquence, is to be sought for in holy Scripture. Each part of it is to be read with the same spirit it was made. We should rather search after spirituall profit in Scriptures, then subtilty of speech. We ought to reade plain and devout books as willingly as high and learned. Let not the reputation of the Writer offend thee. whether he be of great or small learning; but let the pure word of truth move thee to reade. Search not who spake this or that, but mark what is spoken.

2. Men passe away; but the truth of our Lord remaineth for ever. God speaks unto us sundry wayes, without respect of persons. Our

own curiosity often hindreth us in reading of the Scriptures, when as we will examine and discusse that which we should rather passe over without more ado. If thou desire to reap profit, reade humbly, plainly, and faithfully: never desire the estimation of learning. Inquire willingly, and heare with silence the words of holy men: dislike not the parables of Elders, for they are not recounted without cause.

CHAP. VI.

Of inordinate desires, and affections.

WHensoever a man desireth any thing inordinately, he is presently disquieted in himself. The proud and covetous can never rest. The poor and humble in spirit live together in all peace. The man that hath not wholly subdued himself, is quickly tempted and overcome in small and trifling things. The weak in spirit, and he that is yet in a manner

manner subject to his appetites, and prone to sensible things, can hardly withdraw himself altogether from earthly desires. And therefore he is often afflicted, when he goeth about to retire himself from them: and easily falleth into indignation, when any opposition is made against him.

2. And if he hath followed therein his appetite, he is presently disquieted with remorse of conscience; for that he yielded to his passion which profiteth him nothing to the obtaining of the peace he sought for. True quiet of mind therefore, is gotten by resisting our passions, not by obeying them. There is no peace in the heart of a carnall man, nor of him that is addicted to outward things, but in the spirituall and fervent.

CHAP. VII.

Of flying vain hope and pride.

HE is vain that putteth his trust in men or creatures. Be not a-

shamed to serve others for the love of Jesus Christ; nor to be esteemed poore in this world. Presume not upon thy self, but place thy hope in God. Do what lieth in thy power, and God will assist thee. Trust not in thine own knowledge, nor in the wisdom or prudence of any living creature: but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble, and humbleth the presumptuous and proud.

2. Glory not in wealth if thou have it, nor in the power of thy friends; but in God who giveth all things, and above all desireth to give thee himself. Extoll not thy self for the stature and beauty of thy body, which is dissolved and disfigured with every little sicknesse. Take not pleasure in thy naturall gifts or wit, lest thereby thou displease God, to whom appertaineth all the good whatsoever nature hath given thee.

3. Esteem not thy self better then others, lest perhaps in the sight of

of God, who knoweth what is in man, thou be accounted worse then they. Be not proud of welldoing : for the judgements of God are far different from the judgements of men, and that often offendeth him which pleaseth them. If there be any good in thee, believe that there is much more in others, that so thou maist the better keep within thy heart the precious treasure of humility. It is no prejudice unto thee to esteem thy self worse then all the world : but it hurteth thee very much to preferre thy self before any one. The humble enjoy continuall peace : but in the heart of the proud is envy and indignation.

CHAP. VIII.

That too much familiarity is to be shunned.

LAy not thy heart open to every one ; but treat of thy affairs with the wise and such as fear God. Converse not much with young
B 4 people

people and strangers. Flatter not the rich ; neither do thou appear willingly before great personages. Keep company with the humble, simple, devout, and virtuous; and conferre with them of those things that may edifie. Be not familiar with any woman; but in generall commend all good women to God. Desire to be familiar with God alone and his Angels, and flie the knowledge of men.

2. We must have charity towards all, but familiarity with all is not expedient. Sometimes it falleth out, that the fame of some person that is unknown, is much esteemed; whose presence notwithstanding is not gratefull to the eyes of the beholders. We think sometimes to please others by our company, and we rather distaste them with our disordered manners, and the evil customes which they discover in us.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of obedience and subjection.

IT is a great matter to live in obedience, to be under a superiour, and not to be at our own disposing. It is much safer to obey, then to govern. Many live under obedience, rather for necessity then for charity: such are discontented, and do easily repine and murmur. Neither can they attain to freedom of mind, unlesse they willingly and heartily put themselves under obedience for the love of God. Go whither thou wilt, thou shalt find no rest but in humble subjection under the government of a Superiour. The imagination and change of places have deceived many.

2. True it is; that every one willingly doth that which agreeth with his own sense and liking; and is apt to affect those most that are of his own mind: But if God be amongst us, we must leave our own judge-

ment, that so peace and quietnesse may be the better preserved. Who is so wise that he can fully know all things ? Trust not therefore to thine own conceits ; but be willing to hear the judgement of others. If that which thou thinkest be good, and notwithstanding thou forsakest it for God, and followest the opinion of another, it shall be better for thee,

3. I have often heard, that it is more secure to hear and take counsel, then to give it. It may also fall out, that each ones opinion may be good : but to refuse to yield to others when as reason or cause requireth it, is a token of wilfulnesse and pride.

CHAP. X.

Of the avoiding superfluity in words.

Fly the unquietnesse of men as much as thou canst : for the talk of worldly affairs hindereth very

ry much, although they be recounted with sincere intention; for we are quickly defiled, and as it were enthralled with vanity. I could wish that I had oftentimes held my peace, when I have spoken; and that I had not been in company. Why do we so willingly speak and talk one with another, when notwithstanding we seldom return to silence without hurt of conscience? The cause why we so willingly talk, is for that by discoursing one with another, we seek to receive comfort one of another: and desire to ease our mind overwearied with sundry thoughts: and we talk willingly, and think of those things which we love best, and most desire; or of those which we feel most contrary and troublesome unto us.

2. But alas, oftentimes in vain, and to no end: for this outward comfort is the cause of no small losse of inward and divine consolation. Therefore we must watch and pray, lest our time passe without

out any fruit or profit. If it be lawfull and expedient for thee to speak those things that may edifie. An evil custome and neglect of our own good doth give too much libertie to inconsiderate speech: Yet devout discourses of heavenly things do greatly further our progresse in spirit, especially where persons of one mind and spirit be gathered together in God.

CHAP. XI.

Of the obtaining of peace, and zeal of spirituall profit.

WE might enjoy peace, if we would not busie our selves with the words and deeds of other men which appertain nothing to our charge. How can he live long in peace, that thrusteth himself into the cares of others, or that little or seldome recollecteth himself within his own breast? Blessed are the simple and pure minds; for they shall enjoy much peace.

2. What

2. What is the reason, why some of the Saints were so perfect and contemplative? Because they laboured to mortifie themselves wholly to earthly desires: and therefore they could with their whole heart give themselves to God, and freely attend to their own affairs. We are too much lead by our own passions, and too solicitous for transitory things. We also seldom overcome any one vice perfectly, and are not inflamed with a fervent desire to profit in spirit: and therefore we remain cold in devotion, and scarce warm in religion.

3. If we were perfectly dead unto our selves, and not entangled within our own breasts; then we might also have some taste of divine things, and feel the sweetnesse of heavenly contemplation. The greatest and indeed the whole impediment is, for that we are not free from our passions, and disordered inclinations; neither do we
en-

endeavour to enter into that path of perfection, which the Saints have walked before us: and when any small adversity befalleth us, we are too quickly dejected, and turn our selves to humane comforts.

4. If we endeavour like men of courage to stand continually in the battel; surely we should feel the favourable assistance of God from heaven. For he who giveth us occasion to fight, to the end we may get the victory, is ready to succour those that fight manfully, and do trust in his grace. If we esteem our progresse in religious life, to consist onely in these exteriour observations, our devotion will quickly be at an end. Let us lay the ax to the root, that being freed from passions; we may find rest to our souls.

5. If every year we would root out one vice, we should quickly become perfect men. But now oftentimes we perceive it goeth contrary, and that we were better and of a more

more pure conscience at the beginning of our conversion, then after many years of our profession. Our fervour and profit should increase daily; but now it is accounted a great matter, if one can retain but some part of his first spirit. If we would use but a little violence in the beginning, then should we be able to perform all things afterwards with ease and joy of heart.

6. It is a hard matter to leave that to which we are accustomed, but harder to do against our own wills. But if thou dost not overcome little and easie things, how wilt thou overcome harder matters? Resist thy inclination in the first motions, and break off evil customs, lest perhaps by little & little they draw thee to greater difficulty. O, if thou didst consider how much inward peace unto thy self, and joy unto others thou shouldst procure by demeaning thy self well, I suppose thou wouldst be more carefull of thy spirituall profit.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of the profit of adversity.

IT is good that we have sometimes grief and adversities : for they often make a man enter into himself, and remember that he is here in banishment, and ought not to place his trust in any worldly thing. It is good that we be sometimes contrarietied ; and that there be an evil or hard conceit had of us ; and this, although we do and intend well. These things help often to the attaining of humility , and defend us from vain glory : for then we chiefly seek God for our inward witnesse, when outwardly we be contemned by men, and when there is no credit given unto us.

2. And therefore a man should settle himself so fully in God, that he needed not to seek many comforts of men. When a good and virtuous man is afflicted, tempted, or troubled with evil thoughts ; then he understandeth better the great

great need he hath of Gods assistance, without whose help he perceiveth he can do nothing that is good. Then also he sorroweth, lamenteth, and prayeth for the miseries he suffereth. Then he is weary of living longer, and wisheth that death would come, that he might be dissolved and be with Christ. Then also he well perceiveth, that complete security and perfect peace cannot be had in this world.

CHAP. XIII.

Of resisting temptations.

SO long as we live in this world we cannot be without tribulation and temptation; for as it is written in Job, Temptation is the life of man upon earth. Every one therefore ought to be carefull, and diligently to arm himself with prayer against his temptations, lest the devil find time and place to deceive him; who never sleepeth, but goeth

eth about seeking whom he may devour. No man is so perfect and holy, but hath sometimes temptations : and we cannot be altogether free from them.

2. Temptations are often profitable to men, though they be troublesome & grievous : for in them man is humbled, purged, and instructed. All the Saints have passed and profited through many tribulations and temptations ; and they that could not bear temptations, became reprobate and fell from God. There is no order so holy, nor place so secret, where there be not temptations or adversities.

3. There is no man that is altogether free from temptations whilest he liveth on earth : for in our selves is the cause thereof, being born with inclination to evil. When one temptation or tribulation goeth away, another cometh ; and we shall ever have something to suffer, because we have lost that innocency with which we were created. Many seek

to flie temptation, and do fall more grievously into them. By flight alone we cannot overcome, but by patience and true humility we become stronger then all our enemies.

4. He that onely avoideth them outwardly, and doth not pluck them up by the roots shall profit little: yea temptation will the sooner return unto him, and he shall feel himself in a worse case then before. By little and little, and by patience with longanimity (through Gods help) thou shalt more easily overcome then with violence and thine own importunity. Often take counsel in temptations: and deal not roughly with him that is tempted; but give him comfort, as thou wouldst wish to be done to thy self.

5. The beginning of all evil temptations is inconstancy of mind, and little confidence in God. For as a ship without a stern is tossed to and fro with the waves: so the man that is negligent, and leaveth

leaveth his purpose is many wayes tempted. Fire trieth iron and temptation a iust man. We know not oftentimes what we are able to do, but temptations do shew us what we are. We must be watchfull, especially in the beginning of the temptation; for the enemy is then more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the doore of our hearts, but be resisted without the gate at his first knock. Wherefore one said, Withstand the beginnings, for an after remedie comes often too late. First there cometh to the mind an evil thought, then a strong imagination thereof, afterward delight and an evil motion, and then consent: and so by little and little our wicked enemy getteth full entrance, whilst he is not resisted in the beginning. And how much the longer one is negligent in resisting, so much the weaker doth he become daily, and the enemy stronger against him.

6. Some suffer greatest temptations

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tions in the beginning of their conversion; others in the latter end; others again are much troubled almost through the whole time of their life. Some are but easily tempted according to the wisdom and equity of the divine appointment, which weigheth the states and deserts of men, and ordaineth all things for the saving of his elect and chosen servants.

7. We ought not therefore to despair when we are tempted, but so much the more fervently to pray unto God, that he will vouchsafe to help us in all tribulation; who surely according to the saying of S. Paul will make with the temptation such issue, that we may be able to sustain it. Let us therefore humble our selves under the hand of God in all temptations and tribulations; for he will save and exalt the humble in spirit.

8. In temptations and afflictions man is proved how much he hath profited; and his reward is thereby

thereby the greater before God, and his virtues do more openly appear. Neither is it any great matter if a man be devout and fervent, when he feeleth no heavinesse : but if in time of adversity he bear himself patiently, there is hope of great good. Some are kept from great temptations, and are often overcome in small ones which do daily occurre ; to the end that being humbled, they may never presume on themselves in great matters, who in so small things do see themselves so weak.

CHAP. XIV.

Of avoiding rash judgement.

Turn thine eyes unto thy self, and beware thou judge not rashly the deeds of other men. In judging of others a man alwayes laboureth in vain, often erreth, and quickly sinneth ; but in judging and discussing of himself, he alwayes laboureth fruitfully. We often judge

d, of things according to our own desires : for private affection bereaves us easily of true judgement. If God were alwayes the pure intention of our desire, we should not be so much troubled with the repugnance of our sensuality.

2. But oftentimes some inward secret inclination, or outward affection occurreth, which draweth us after it. Many secretly seek themselves in their actions, and know it not. They seem also to live in good peace of mind, when things are done according to their will and opinion; but if it succeed otherwise then they desire, they are straight-ways troubled, and much afflicted. The diversities of judgements and opinions, cause oftentimes dissentions between religious and devout persons.

3. An old custome is hardly broken, and no man is willingly lead further then himself liketh. If thou wilt more rely upon thine own reason or industry, then upon the virtue

tue of obedience to Jesus Christ, it will be long before thou be illuminated with grace: for Almighty God will have us perfectly subject unto him, and that being enflamed with his love, we transcend the narrow limits of humane reason.

CHAP. XV.

Of works done of Charity.

FOR no worldly thing, nor for the love of any man, is any evil to be done: but yet for the profit of one that standeth in need, a good work is sometimes to be left off, or changed also for a better. For by doing this, a good work is not lost but changed into a better. The exterior work without charity profiteth nothing; but whatsoever is done of charity be it never so little and contemptible in the sight of the world, it is fruitfull and of great esteem in the sight of God. For God weigheth more with how much love one worketh, then how much

much he doeth. He doeth much,
that loveth much.

2. He doeth much that doeth a
thing well: he doeth well that ra-
ther serveth the common good of
others, then his own will. Often-
times it seemeth to be charity, & it
is rather carnality: because naturall
inclination, self-will, hope of re-
ward, and desire of our own com-
modity will seldome be wanting.

3. He that hath true and perfect
charity, seeketh himself in nothing;
but onely desireth in all things that
the glory of God should be exalted.
He also envieth none; because he
loveth no private good: neither,
will he rejoyce in himself; but
willeth above all things to enjoy
God. He attributeth nothing that
is good to any man, but wholly
referreth it unto God, from whom
as from the fountain all things
proceed; in whom finally all Saints
have perfect rest by fruition of his
glory. O, he that had one spark,
of perfect charity, how easily would

he discern that all earthly things be full of vanity !

CHAP. XVI.

*Of bearing with the defects
of others.*

THose things that a man cannot amend in himself or in others, he ought to suffer patiently, untill God ordain otherwise. Think that perhaps it is better so for thy trial and patience, without which all our good deeds are not much to be esteemed. Thou oughtest to pray, notwithstanding when thou hast such impediments, that God would vouchsafe to help thee, and that thou mayest bear them patiently.

2. If one that is once or twice warned doth not amend, contend not with him ; but commit all to God, that his will may be fulfilled, and his name honoured in all his servants, who knoweth how to turn evil into good. Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects
and

and infirmities of others, for that thy self also hast many things which must be suffered by others. If thou canst not make thy self such an one as thou wouldst, how canst thou expect to have an other in all things to thy liking? We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our own faults.

3. We will have others severely corrected, and will not be corrected our selves. The large liberty of others displeaseth us: and yet we will not have our desires denied us. We will have others kept under by rigorous laws; but in no sort will our selves be restrained. And thus it appeareth, how seldome we weigh our neighbour in the same ballance with our selves. If all men were perfect, what should we have to suffer of our neighbour for God?

4. But now God hath thus ordained, that we may learn to bear one anothers burden: for no man is without defect, no man without burden, no man sufficient of him-
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self, no man endued with so much wisdom as he needeth; but we ought to bear with one another, comfort one another, help, instruct, and admonish one another. Adversity best discovereth how great virtue each one hath: for occasions make not a man frail, but do shew what he is.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Religious life.

THOU must learn to break thy own will in many things, if thou wilt have peace and concord with others. It is no small matter to dwell in community, or in a congregation, and to converse therein without complaint, and to persevere therein faithfully untill death. Blessed is he that hath there lived well, and ended happily. If thou wilt persevere in grace as thou oughtest, and profit in virtue, esteem thy self as a banished man, and a pilgrime upon earth. Thou must
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be contented for the love of Christ to be esteemed as a fool in this world, if thou desire to lead a virtuous and perfect religious life.

2. The wearing of a religious habit, and shaving of the crown do little profit; but change of manners, and perfect mortification of passions make a true religious man. He that seeketh any thing else but God, and the health of his soul, shall find nothing but tribulation and sorrow. Neither can he remain long in peace, that laboureth not to be in the meanest place, and subject to all.

3. Thou camest to serve, not to be served. Know that thou wast called to suffer and to labour, not to be idle, or to spend thy time in talk. Here in the school of Christ men are proved as gold in the furnace. Here no man can stand, unlesse he humble himself with his whole heart for the love of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the examples of the holy Fathers.

CONSIDER the lively examples of the holy Fathers, in whom true perfection and religion shined; and thou shalt see how little it is, and almost nothing, which we do now in these dayes. Alas, what is our life if it be compared to them! The Saints and friends of Christ served our Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakednesse, in labour and wearinesse, in watching and fasting, in prayer and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproches.

2. O, how many and grievous tribulations suffered the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessours, Virgins, and all the rest that endeavoured to follow the steps of Christ! They hated their lives in this world, that they might possesse their souls in everlasting life. O how strait and poore a life lead those holy Fathers in the wildernesse! How long and grievous

grievous tentations suffered they! How often & how grievously were they assaulted by their ghostly enemy! How fervent prayers offered they daily to God! How rigorous abstinence did they use! How fervent zeal and care had they of their spirituall profit! How strong and continuall a combat had they for the overcoming of vices! How pure and upright intention kept they unto God! In the day they laboured, and in the night they attended to continuall prayer, although when they laboured also they ceased not from mentall prayer.

3. They spent all their time with profit: every houre seemed short for the service of God, and for the great sweetnesse they had in contemplation they forgot the necessity of corporall refection. They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends and kinsfolke; they desired to have nothing which appertained to the world; they scarce took things necessary for the sustenance

of life ; they grieved to serve their bodies even in necessity. They were poore in earthly things, but rich in grace and virtues. Outwardly they wanted , but inwardly they were replenished with grace and spirituall comfort.

4. They were strangers in the world, but near and familiar friends to God. They seemed to themselves as nothing and abject to this world : but they were precious and beloved in the eyes of God. They were grounded in true humility, lived in simple obedience, walked in charity and patience: and therefore they profited daily in spirit, and obtained great grace in God's sight. They were given for an example and pattern of perfection in Gods Church, and their example should more stirre us up to a desire of our spirituall profit, then the number of the lukewarm and dissolute livers draw us to the neglect thereof.

5. O how great was the fervour of all religious persons in the beginning

ginning of their holy institution! How great was their devotion to prayer? How diligent emulation of virtue? How exact discipline flourished? How great reverence and obedience, under the rule of their Superiours, observed they in all things? Their footsteps yet remaining do testifie that they were indeed holy and perfect men; who fighting so valiantly trode the world under their feet. Now he is greatly accounted of, that breaketh not the rule, and that can with patience endure that which he hath professed.

6. O coldnesse and negligence of our time that we so quickly decline from our first fervour, and are come to that passe, that very sloth and coldnesse of spirit maketh our own life tedious unto us. Would to God the desire to profit in virtue did not wholly sleep in thee, who hast often seen the holy examples of devout and religious souls.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the exercise of a good and religious person.

THe life of a religious person ought to shine with all virtues: that he may inwardly be such as outwardly he seemeth to men. And with reason thou oughtest to be much more within, then is perceived without: for God beholdeth the heart, whom we ought most highly to reverence wheresoever we are, and walk in purity like Angels in his sight; and to renew daily our purposes, and stirre up our selves to fervour, as though this were the first day of our conversion, and to say, Help me my God in this my good purpose, and in thy holy service; and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly: for that which I have done hitherto is nothing.

2. According to our purpose shall be the successe of our profit: and much diligence is necessary to him
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that will profit much. And if he that firmly purposeth often faileth, what shall he do that seldome purposeth any thing, or with little certainty? It may fall out sundry wayes that we leave off our good intents, and the least omission of spiritual exercises bringeth no little hinderance to our souls. The determinations of the just depend upon Gods grace, and not upon their own wisdom; upon whom they alwayes rely for whatsoever they take in hand. For man doth purpose, but God doth dispose, neither is the way of man in his own hands.

3. If usuall exercise be sometimes omitted either for piety towards God, or profit to my neighbour, it may easily afterwards be recovered again. But if out of a slothfull mind or carelesse negligence we forsake the same, it is a great offence against God, and very prejudiciall to our selves. Let us do the best we can we shall fail
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in many things , yet let us alwayes take some certain course , and especially against those vices which do most of all molest us. We must diligently search into and set in order both the outward and the inward man, because both of them are very necessary to our coming forward in godlinesse.

4. If thou canst not continually call thy self to an account yet do it sometimes , at the least once a day, to wit , at morning or at night. In the morning consider what thou intendest to do and at night examine thy self what thou hast done. How thou hast behaved thy self in thought , word , and deed , for in these perhaps thou hast often offended both God and thy neighbour. Gird thy loyns like a man against the vile assaults of the devil; bridle thy riotous appetite , and thou shalt be the better able to keep under all the untuly motions of the flesh. Be thou at no time idle altogether , but either reading ,
or

or writing, or praying, or meditating, or endeavouring something for the publick good. As for bodily exercises they must be used with great discretion, neither are they to be practised of all men alike.

5. The exercises that are not common are not to be exposed to publick view; for things private are practised more safely at home. Nevertheless thou must beware thou neglect not that which is common, and be more ready for private occasions. But having fully and faithfully accomplished all thou art bound and enjoyned to do, if thou hast any spare time, betake thee to thy self, as thy devotion shall require. All cannot use one kind of exercise, but one is more convenient for this person, another for that; according to the diversity of times also divers exercises are fitting. Some sute better with us on working dayes, other on holy-dayes: some we have need of in temptation, and of others in time of peace
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and quietnesse. Some we mind when we are penfive, and other some when we rejoyce in the Lord.

6. When chief festivalls draw near, good exercises are to be renewed, and the prayers of holy men more fervently to be implored. From feast to feast we should think thus with our selves, as though we were then to depart out of this world, and to be made partakers of that everlasting feast in heaven. Therefore ought we carefully to prepare our selves against such holy times, and lead our conversation so strictly as though we were shortly at Gods hands to receive the reward of our labours.

7. But if our departure be deferred, let us think with our selves that we are not sufficiently prepared, and unworthy yet of so great glory which shall be revealed to us in due time; and let us endeavour to prepare our selves more diligently to our end. Blessed is that servant (saith S. Luke the Evangelist) whom

whom when his Lord cometh he shall find him watching ; verily I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

CHAP. XX.

Of the love of solitude and silence.

SEEK for an apt and convenient time to be at leisure to thy self, and meditate often upon Gods benefits and blessings. Meddle not with curiosities, but peruse such matter which may rather yield compunction to thy heart, then information to thy head. If thou wilt withdraw thy self from speaking vainly and from gadding idly, as also from hearkening after novelties and rumours, thou shalt find leisure sufficient and convenient enough to meditate on good things. The greatest and best of Gods Saints avoided the society of men when they could conveniently, and did rather choose to live secretly, and set themselves apart unto God.

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2. One said, As oft as I have been among men, I returned home lesse a man then I was before ; and this we find true when we talk long together. It is easier not to speak a word at all, then not to speak more words then we should ; It is easier for a man to keep home, then to keep himself well when he is abroad. He therefore that intends to increase in the spirit and inner man, must with Jesus depart from the multitude and presse of people. No man safely doth go abroad, but he which gladly can abide at home: no man speaks securely but he that holds his peace willingly. No man ruleth safely but he that is ruled willingly ; no man securely doth command, but he that hath learned readily to obey.

3. No man rejoyceth securely, unlesse he hath the testimony of a good conscience ; yet the security of the Saints was alwayes full of the fear of God. Neither did those eminent gifts and excellent graces
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that were in them, make them more haughty, but more humble. But the security of the wicked as it ariseth of pride and presumption, so in the end it deceiveth them and turneth to their own destruction. Although thou seem to be a good religious man, or never so devout, yet promise not thy self security in this life.

1. It falleth out many times that those have fallen into greatest danger by overmuch confidence and presumption, who have been in greatest esteem and account amongst men. Wherefore it is better for many not to be altogether free from temptations, but often assaulted, lest by too much security they should be puffed up with pride, or rely too much upon worldly comforts. O how good a conscience would he keep that would not seek after transitory joy, who would not entangle himself with the affairs of this world! O how great peace and quietnesse should he possesse, that would cast away all vain cares,

ceres and think onely upon heavenly things and would place all his hope and confidence in God !

5. No man is worthy of heavenly comfort, unlesse he have diligently exercised himself in holy compunction. If thou desirest true contrition of heart, enter into thy closet, and shut out all worldly tumult, as it is written, Examine your own hearts upon your beds, and be still. In thy closet thou shalt find what abroad thou shalt often lose ; the more thou visitest thy closet, the more thou wilt like it ; the lesse thou comest thereunto, the more thou wilt loth it. If in the beginning of thy amendment thou art content to remain in it, and keep it well, it will afterwards be to thee a dear friend, and a most pleasant comfort.

6. In silence and in quietnesse a devout soul maketh her self perfect, and learneth the secrets and mysteries of holy Scripture. There she findeth fouds of tears wherein she
may

may every night wash and cleanse her self that she may be so much the more familiar with her Creator, by how much the further off she liveth from all worldly disquiet. Who so therefore withdraweth himself from his acquaintance and friends; God and his holy Angels will draw near unto him. It is better to live privately and to have regard to himself, then to neglect himself and his own salvation, though he could work miracles. It is very commendable in a religious person seldome to go abroad, to be unwilling either to see or be seen.

7. Why art thou willing and desirous to see that which is unlawfull for thee to have and enjoy? for the world passeth away and the lusts thereof. Our sensuall desires draw us to rove abroad, but when the pleasure is past, what carriest thou home with thee: but a grieved conscience and distracted mind? A merry going out bringeth commonly a mournfull return home;
and

and a joyfull evening makes many times a sad morning. So all carnall joy hath a pleasant entrance, but in the end it biteth like an Adder, and stings like a cockatrice. What canst thou see elsewhere, which thou canst not see here? behold, here are Heaven and Earth and all the Elements; for of these are all things created.

8. What canst thou see any where that can long continue under the sun? thou thinkest perchance to satiate thy self and have thy fill; but thou shalt never attain it. Shouldst thou see all things present before thine eyes, it were but a vain and unprofitable sight; lift up thine eyes to God in the highest, and pray him to pardon all thy sinnes and infirmities. Leave vain things to the vain, and do thou give heed to that which God commandeth: shut the doore upon thy self, and call unto thee Jesus thy Beloved. Stay with him in thy closet, for thou shalt not find so great peace any-

any-where else: Hadst thou not gone abroad and hearkened to idle rumours, thou hadst lived more at content. Seeing therefore thou delightest sometimes to hear news, it is fit thou suffer for it some unquietnesse and trouble of mind.

C H A P. XXI.

Of Compunction of heart.

IF thou wilt profit any thing, keep thy self alwayes in the fear of God, and yield not too much scope to libertie. Keep in awa'l thy senses under the severe rod of discipline, and give not thy self over to foolish mirth. Give thy self to compunction of heart, and thou shalt find much devotion therein: compunction bringeth much good which dissolutenesse is wont quickly to destroy. It is a wonder that any man can heartily rejoyce in this life, if he duly consider his banishment, and throughly weigh the
many

many perils wherewith his soul is environed. The levity of our minds and the little care we have of our faults maketh us insensible of the sorrows of our souls.

2. But oftentimes we vainly laugh when we have just cause to weep: the service and fear of God is the truest liberty, and a good conscience a continuall feast. Happy is he that can avoid all cause of distraction, and recollect himself to the union of holy compunction. Happy is he that can abandon all that may defile or burthen his conscience. Resist manfully: one custome overcometh another. If thou canst forbear meddling in other mens matters, they likewise shall not have to do with thine.

3. Busie not thy self in matters which appertain to others; neither do thou meddle at all with the affairs of thy betters. Still have an eye to thy self first, and be sure more especially to instruct thy self,
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before all thy loving friends. If thou hast not the favour of men, be not grieved at it ; but take this to heart, because thou dost not carry thy self so warily and circumspectly as it becometh the servant of God, and a devout religious man. It is better oftentimes and more secure that a man hath not consolations in this life, especially such as are consonant to our carnall desires. But that we have not at all or do very seldome taste divine consolation, the fault is ours, because we seek not after inward compunction, as having not altogether forsaken outward vanities.

4. Know that thou art unworthy of divine consolation , and that thou hast deserved much tribulation. When a man hath perfect contrition, then is the whole world grievous and lothsome unto him. A good man findeth alwayes sufficient cause of mourning : for whether he consider his own or his neighbours estate, he knoweth that
none

none liueth here without great tribulation. And by how much a man looks narrowly into himself, by so much he sees greater cause of lamentation. Our sinnes and wickednesses wherein we lie weltring that we can seldome apply our selves to heavenly contemplations, do minister unto us much matter of sorrow and compunction.

5. Didst thou but as often think with thy self how soon thou maist die, as how long thou maist live, there is no question but thou wouldst willingly undergo any labour or sorrow in this world, and and not be afraid of the greatest severity. But because we do not take these things to heart and as yet love those things onely that delight us, this makes us so dull and key-cold in religion.

6. If our body be amiss we may thank our selves for it : it is often our decay and want of spirit which maketh our miserable body so easily complain. Pray therefore un-

to the Lord with all humility, that he will vouchsafe to give thee the spirit of contrition. And say with the Prophet, Feed me, O Lord, with the bread of tears, and give me plenteousnesse of tears to drink.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the Consideration of humane misery.

Miserable thou art wheresoever thou be, or whithersoever thou turnest, unlesse thou turn thy self unto God. Why art thou troubled when things succeed not as thou wouldest or desirest? for who is he that hath all things according to his mind? Neither I nor thou, nor any man upon earth; there is none in this world be he King or Pope, without some tribulation or other. Who is then in the best estate or condition? even he who for Gods sake can suffer affliction.

2. Many weak and frail men can
D say,

say, O what an happy life hath such an one, how wealthy, how mighty he is, in how great honour and credit! But lift up thine eyes to the riches of heaven, and thou shalt perceive that all the goods of this life are nothing so to be accounted of. They are very uncertain, rather burdensome then delightfull, because they are never enjoyed without carefulnesse and fear. Mans happinesse consisteth not in having abundance of wealth but a mean estate should content him; it is truly misery enough even to live upon the earth. The more a man hungreth after godlinesse, the more he abhorreth this life; because he seeth more clearly and perceiveth more sensibly the defects of humane corruption. For to eat and to drink, to sleep and to watch, to labour and to rest, and to be subject to other necessities of nature, is doubtlesse a great misery to a devout mind, that would gladly be free and delivered from sinne.

3. For the inward man is much oppressed with these outward and corporall necessities whilest we live in this world. Therefore the holy Prophet prayeth with great devotion to be delivered from them, saying, Draw me, O Lord, out of my necessities. But woe to them that know not their own misery; and a greater woe to them that take delight in this miserable and corruptible life. And some there be so much doted upon it, although with great labour and pains they can scarce get bread to eat, yet could they live here alwayes, they would care but little for the kingdome of heaven.

4. O how mad are these in their brains and faithlesse in their hearts, who lie so deeply drowned in the earth, that they can think of nothing but earthly things. But miserable wretches as they are, they shall in the end feel to their cost how vile and vain that was which they loved: Whereas the Saints of

God, and all the fast friends of Christ look not on those things which pleased the flesh, and flourished for a time but panted after everlasting treasures with all greedinesse and desire. Their whole desire was carried upward to things durable and invisible, that the desire of things visible might not draw them to things below. O brother lose not thy confidence to come forward in godlinesse; there is yet time, the houre is not yet past.

5. Why wilt thou deferre thine amendment from day to day, arise and begin this very instant, and say, Now is the time to be doing, now is the time to be working, now is the best time to amend myself. When thou art ill at ease and much troubled, then is the time to profit best; thou must passe through fire and water before thou comest to a place of refreshing. Unless thou offer violence to thy self thou shalt never get the Victory over sinne: so long as we carry about

us this frail body of ours, we can never be without sin, or live without sorrow. We could gladly be quiet and freed from all misery, but seeing by sinne we have lost our innocency, we have by that also forfeited our felicity. Therefore we must hold our selves content, and expect the mercy of God till this our iniquitie be put away, and this mortalitie of ours be swallowed up of life.

6 O how great is humane frailty which is alwayes prone to evil! to day thou confellest thy sinnes, and to morrow thou comittest the very same thou hast confessed. Now thou art in the mind to look well unto thy wayes, and within a while thou so behevst thy self, as though thou hadst never any such mind at all. Good cause have we therefore to humble our selves, and never to have any great conceit of our worth, we are so frail in our nature, so inconstant in our courses. Besides, that may quickly be lost by

our own negligence, which by the grace of God and our own great pains we have scarce at length obtained.

7. What will become of us in the end, who begin to wax cold so timely? Wo be unto us if we will now give our selves unto ease, as if all were in peace and safetie, when yet there appeareth no signe of sanctity in our conversations! We have need like young beginners to be newly instructed again to good manners, if happily there be any hope of our future amendment and spirituall progresse.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the meditation of Death.

THere will very quickly be an end of thee here, therefore see what will become of thee hereafter. To day a man, to morrow none; and out of sight out of mind. O the stupidity and hardnesse of mans heart,

heart, who thinketh onely upon the present, and hath no care of the time to come! Thou shouldest so order thy self in all thy thoughts and actions, as if to day, yea this very moment thou wert ready to depart. Hadst thou a clear conscience thou wouldst not greatly fear death: care not so much for the death of this body as the sinne of thy soul. If thou art not prepared to day, how wilt thou be prepared to morrow? thou knowest not what will be to morrow, and how knowest thou that thou shalt live till to morrow?

2. What are we the better to live long, if we prove not the better by long living? for length of dayes doth oftner make our finnes the greater, then our lives the better. O that we had spent but one day well in this world! Many keep in mind how long it is since their conversion, and yet forget to fructifie in a holy conversation. If to die be accounted dreadfull, to

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live

live long may prove more dangerous. Happy is he that hath his end before his eyes, and prepareth himself to die daily. If at any time thou hast seen another man die, make account thou must follow him, he hath shewed thee but the way.

3. When it is morning think thou mayest die before night, and when evening comes, presume not upon next morning. Be thou therefore alwayes in a readinesse, and so lead thy life that death may never take thee unprepared. Many die suddenly and when they look not for it: for the Sonne of man will come when we think not of his coming. When thy last sand shall be run out, thou wilt have a farre different opinion of thy whole life that is past, and be exceeding sorry, thou hast been so carelesse and remisse.

4. O how wise and happy is he that now laboureth to be such an one in his life, as he wisheth to be found

found at the houre of his death. To contemne the world perfectly, to go forward in virtue zealously, to love reproof willingly, to amend our lives seriously, to obey superiours gladly, to deny himself thoroughly, and to suffer affliction for his sake patiently, make us confident we shall die happily. Whilest thou art in health thou mayst do many good deeds, but when thou art sick I see not what thou art able to do. Few in the weaknesse of their bodies gather strength to their souls: as they who are walking abroad, are seldome settled at home.

5. Trust not to friends and kindred, neither do thou put off the care of thy soul till hereafter for men will sooner forget thee, then thou art aware of. It is better to look to it betime, and do some good beforehand, then to trust to other mens courtesies. If thou dost not provide for thy self in this world, who will have care of thee

in that which is to come. The time that is now present is very precious, now is the day of salvation, now is the acceptable time. But alas that thou shouldst spend thy time so idly here, where thou mightst purchase to live eternally hereafter. The time will come when thou shalt desire one day or houre to amend in, and it is a great question whether it will be granted thee.

6. O beloved, from how great danger mightst thou deliver thy self! from how great fear free thy self if thou wouldest be now fearfull and carefull how to die! Labour now to live so, that at the houre of death thou mayst rather rejoyce then fear: learn now to die to the world, that thou mayst begin to live with Christ. Learn now to contemne all earthly things that thou mayst freely go to Christ. Chastise thy body now by repentance that thou mayst then have assured confidence.

7. Ab

7. Ah fool, why dost thou think to live long, when thou canst not promise to thy self one day? how many have been deceived and suddenly snatched away? How often dost thou hear these reports, Such a man is slain, another man is drowned, a third breaks his neck with a fall, this man died eating, and that man playing? One perished by fire, another by the sword, another of the plague, and another was slain by thieves: thus death is the end of all, and mans life suddenly passeth away like a shadow.

8. Who shall remember thee when thou art dead? and who shall pray for thee when thou canst not help thy self? Do, do now my beloved whatsoever thou art able to do: for thou knowest not when thou shalt die, nor yet what shall befall thee after thy death. Now whilst thou hast time heap unto thy self everlasting treasures, think on nothing but the salvation of thy soul, care for nothing but
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the service of thy God. Make now friends to thy self by honouring the Saints of God, and imitating their virtues, that when thou failest in this short life, they may receive thee into everlasting habitations.

9. Esteem thy self as a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth, and as one to whom the affairs of this world do nothing appertain. Keep thy heart free from the world, and lifted up directly unto God, because thou hast here no abiding city. Send thither thy daily prayers and sighs joyned with unfeigned tears, that after death thy spirit may be happily commended into the hands of the Almighty.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of judgement, and the punishment of Sinnes.

IN all thy wayes have a speciall aim to thy end: for how canst thou be able to stand before a severe

vere Judge to whom nothing is hid. Who is not pacified with gifts, nor admitteth any frivolous excuses, but will judge according to right and equity. O wretched and foolish sinner, who sometimes fearest the countenance of an angry and ignorant man, what answer wilt thou make to an angry and allknowing God? Why dost thou not provide for thy self against that great day of judgement, when no man can excuse or answer for another, but every one shall have enough to answer for himself? Now are thy pains profitable, thy tears acceptable, thy groans audible, thy grief pacifieth for thy finnes and prepareth thy soul.

2. The patient man hath a great and wholesome purgatory, who though he receive injuries, yet grieveth more for the malice of an other then for his own wrongs. Who prayeth willingly for his adversaries, and from his heart forgiveth their offences, and delayeth
not

not to ask forgivenesse of whomsoever he hath offended. Who is sooner moved to compassion then to anger; who often offereth violence to himself, and labourerh earnestly to bring the body into subjection to the spirit. It is better to purge our sins and offences here, then to keep them to be punished hereafter. Verily we do but deceive our selves through an inordinate love of the flesh.

3. What is it that feedeth that everlasting fire but thy sinnes? The more thou sparest thy self and followest thy pleasure now, so much the more hereafter shall be thy punishment, and a greater fewell added to that flame. In what thing a man hath sinned, in the same shall he be punished: there shall the slothfull be pricked forward with burning goads, and the gluttons vexed with great hunger and thirst. There shall the lascivious and lovers of pleasure be bathed in burning pitch and stinking brimstone;
and

and the envious like mad dogs shall howl for very grief.

4. There is no fault but shall have its proper and peculiar torment. There the proud shall be filled with all horreur and confusion: the covetous shall be pinched with exceeding penury: one houre of pain there shall be more bitter then a thousand years of the sharpest penance here. There is no quiet, no comfort for the damned there: yet here we have some intermission of our labours and enjoy the comfort of our friends. Be now solicitous and sorrowfull for thy sinnes, that at the day of judgement thou mayst be secure with the company of blessed souls. For then shall the righteous with great boldnesse stand against such as have vexed and oppressed them; then shall he sit to judge men, who is now content to be judged of men. Then shall the poore and humble have great confidence, but the proud man shall be compassed with fear on every side.

5. Then

5. Then will it appear that he was wise in this world who has learned for Christ to be a fool and despised. Then shall affliction patiently undergone delight us when the mouth of iniquity shall be stopped up, then shall the devout rejoyce and the profane mourn. Then shall he more rejoyce that hath beat down his own flesh, then he that hath abounded in all pleasure and delight. Then shall the poore garment shine and glitter, and the precious robes seem vile and contemptible; then shall be more commended the poore cottage, then the stately pallace. Then will constant patience more avail us then all earthly power, and simple obedience be preferred before all worldly wisdom.

6. Then shall a good and clear conscience more rejoyce a man then the profound learning of philosophy, and the contempt of riches weigh more then all worldly treasures. Then wilt thou be more
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comforted that thou hast prayed devoutly, then feared diligently: and be more glad thou hast kept silence, then that thou hast talked much. Then will good works prevail more then godly words: then a strict life and severe repentance will be more pleasing, then all earthly delight. Prove first here what thou canst indure hereafter, accustome thy self now to suffer a little, that thou mayest then be delivered from more grievous pains. If now thou canst endure so little, how wilt thou then be able to endure perpetuall torments? if a little suffering make thee so impatient, what will hell-fire do hereafter? Assure thy self thou canst not have two Paradises: it is impossible to enjoy delights in this world, and after that reigne for ever with Christ.

7. Suppose thou hast hitherto lived alwayes in honour and delights, what would all this avail thee if thou wert to die at this instant? All therefore is but vanity and vexation

ation of spirit, besides the love of God and his alone service. For he that loveth God with all his heart, is neither afraid of death nor judgement, nor of punishment, nor of hell: for perfect love gives secure access to God. But he that takes delight in sinne, what marvell is it if he be afraid both of death and judgement? Yet it is good although love be not of force to withhold thee from sinne, that at least the fear of hell should restrain thee. But he that laieth aside the fear of God, can never continue long in good estate, but falleth quickly into the snares of the devil.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the zealous amendment of our whole life.

BE watchfull and diligent in the service of God, and often be-think thy self wherefore thou comest hither, and why thou hast left the
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the world. Was it not that thou mightst live to God, and become a spirituall man: be fervent then to come forward, for shortly thou shalt receive a reward of thy labours. There shall not be then any fear or sorrow in thy coasts: labour but now a little, and thou shalt find great rest, yea perpetuall joy to thy soul. If thou continuest faithfull and fervent in doing good, no doubt but God will be faithfull in rewarding thee. Thou oughtst to have a good hope in getting the victory, but thou must not be secure of it, lest thou wax either negligent or proud.

2. When one that was in great anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once, being oppressed with grief, humbly prostrate himself in a Church in prayer, and said within himself, O, if I knew that I should yet persevere! he presently heard as it were a voice from God, which said, What if thou didst know it, what wouldst

wouldst thou do? Do now what thou wouldst do then, and thou shalt be secure. And being herewith comforted and strengthened in mind, he committed himself wholly to the will of God, and that noysome anxiety ceased: neither had he any mind to search curiously any further, to know what should befall him; but rather laboured to understand what was the perfect and acceptable will of God, for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work.

3. Hope in our Lord, and do good, saith the Prophet, and inhabit the land, and thou shalt be fed in the riches thereof. One thing there is that draweth many back from that spirituall good, and the diligent amendment of their lives: the horreur of the difficulty, and the labour of the combat. But they above others profit most in virtue that endeavour most to overcome those things which are grievous, and contrary unto them. For there

there a man profiteth more, and obtaineth ever grace, while he more overcome himself and mortifieth the outward man.

4. But all men have not alike to overcome and mortifie; yet he that is zealous and diligent; though he have more passions, shall profit more in virtue than another that is of a more temperate disposition, if he be less fervent in the pursuit of virtue. Two things especially much further our amendment to wit, to withdraw our selves violently from that to which we are viciously inclined, and to labour earnestly for that virtue which we most want. Be careful also to avoid with great diligence those things in thy self, which do most displease thee in others.

5. Gather some profit to thy soul out of every occasion, and where-soever thou be; so as if thou seest or hearest any good, stirre up thy self to the imitation thereof. But if thou seest any thing worthy of reproof, beware thou do not the same.

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And if at any time thou hast done it, labour quickly to amend it. As thine eye observeth others, so art thou also noted again by others. O how sweet and comfortable a thing it is, to see the servants of Christ fervent and devout, endued with virtuous and decent manners ! And on the contrary, How pittifull and grievous a thing it is, to see them that live in a dissolute and disordered sort, not applying themselves to, that for which they were called ! O how great damage and danger is it, to neglect the good purposes of their vocation, and to busie themselves in that which appertaineth not unto them, nor is committed to their care !

6. Be mindfull of the profession thou hast made, and have alwayes before the eyes of thy soul the remembrance of thy Saviour crucified. Thou hast good cause to be ashamed looking upon the life of Christ, seeing thou hast so slackly endeavoured to conform thy self unto

done into him, though thou hast walked
 a long time in the way of the ser-
 vice of God. A religious person
 that exerciseth himself seriously, and
 devoutly in the most holy life and
 passion of our Lord, shall there a-
 bundantly find whatsoever is neces-
 sary and profitable for him; neither
 shall he need to seek any thing else-
 where, but onely in Jesus. O, if Je-
 sus crucified would come into our
 hearts, how quickly and fully should
 we be instructed in all truth!

7. A fervent religious person ta-
 keth, and beareth all well that is
 commanded him: but he that is
 negligent and cold, hath tribulation
 upon tribulation, and on all sides is
 afflicted: for he is void of inward
 consolation, and is forbidden to
 seek externall comforts. A religi-
 ous person that liveth not accord-
 ing to discipline, is in great danger
 of the ruine of his soul. He that
 seeketh libertie and ease, shall ever
 live in disquiet: for one thing or o-
 ther will alwayes displease him.

8. O that we had nothing else to do but alwayes with our mouth, and whole heart to praise our Lord God! O that thou mightst never have need to eat, nor drink, nor sleep; but mightst alwayes praise God, and onely employ thy self in the exercises of spirit: thou shouldst then be much more happy then now thou art, when for so many necessities thou art constrained to serve thy body. Would God these necessities were not at all, but onely the spirituall refreshments of the soul, which, alas, we taste of so feldome.

9. When a man cometh to that estate that he seeketh no comfort of any creature, then doth he begin to take perfect contentment and delight in God. Then shall he be contented with whatsoever doth befall him in this world. Then shall he neither rejoyce in great matters, nor be sorrowfull for small; but with great integrity and confidence commit himself to God; who

shall

shall be unto him all in all, to whom nothing doth perish, nor die, but all things do live unto him, and serve him at a beck without delay.

10. Remember alwayes thy end, and how that time lost never returns. Without care and diligence thou shalt never get virtue. If thou beginnest to wax cold, it will be evil with thee: but if thou give thy self to fervour of spirit, thou shalt find much peace, and feel lesse labour, through the assistance of Gods grace, and love of virtue. The fervent and diligent man is ready and prepared for all things. It is harder to resist vices and passions then to toil in bodily labours. He that avoideth not small faults, by little and little falleth into greater. Thou wilt alwayes rejoyce in the evening, if thou spend the day profitably. Be watchfull over thy self, stir up thy self, warn thy self, and whatsoever becomes of others neglect not thy self. The greater violence thou usest against thy self, the more thou shalt profit.

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THE SECOND BOOK.

CHAP. I.

Of spirituall conversation.

He kingdome of God is within you , saith the Lord. Turn thee with thy whole heart unto the Lord , and forsake this wretched world , and thy soul shall find rest. Learn to despise extenour things, and to give thy self to the interior , and thou shalt perceive the kingdome of God to come into thee. For the kingdome of God is peace, and joy in the holy Ghost, which is not given to the wicked. Christ will come into thee , and shew thee his divine comfort , if thou prepare for him a worthy mansion within thee. All his glory and beauty is within , and there he pleaseth himself. The inward man he often visits , and bath with him sweet discourses , pleasant comfort, much peace , wonderfull familiarity.

2. O faithfull soul, make ready thy heart for this bridegroom, that he may vouchsafe to come unto thee, and dwell within thee. For he saith: If any love me he will keep my words, and we will come unto him, and will make our abode with him. Give therefore unto Christ a place in thy heart, and deny entrance to all others. When thou hast Christ thou art rich, and he will suffice thee. He will be thy faithfull and provident helper in all things, so as thou shalt not need to trust in men. For men are soon changed, and quickly deceived; but Christ remaineth for ever, and standeth firmly unto the end.

3. There is little trust to be put in frail and mortall man, though he be profitable and dear unto thee: neither oughtest thou much to be grieved if sometimes he crosse and contradict thee. They that to day take thy part, to morrow may be against thee; and so on the contrary, they often turn like unto

the wind. Put all thy trust in God, and fear and love him: He will answer for thee, and do in all things what is best. Thou hast not here a dwelling citie; and wheresoever thou be thou art a stranger and pilgrime: neither shalt thou ever have rest unless thou be perfectly united unto Christ.

4. Why dost thou linger, and make delayes here, since this is not the place of thy rest? In heaven ought to be thy dwelling, and all earthly things are to be regarded as it were in the way. All things passe away, and thou together with them. Beware thou cleave not unto them lest thou be enthralled, and so dost perish. Let thy thought be on the highest, and thy prayer directed unto Christ without ceasing. If thou canst not contemplate high and heavenly things rest thy self in the passion of Christ, and dwell willingly in the wounds of his sacred body. For if thou stie devoutly unto his holy wounds, and to the
pre-

precious marks of his passion, thou shalt feel great comfort in tribulation : neither wilt thou much care for being despised of men , and wilt easily bear the words of slanderous tongues.

5. Christ was also in the world despised, and in great necessity, forsaken by his acquaintance and friends in the midst of slanders. Christ would suffer and be condemned; and darrest thou complain? Christ had adversaries and backbiters ; wilt thou have all men thy friends and benefactors ? For what shall thy patience be crowned, if no adversity happen unto thee? If thou wilt suffer no adversity, how wilt thou be the friend of Christ ? Suffer with Christ and for Christ , if thou desire to reigne with Christ.

6. If thou hast but once perfectly entred into the secrets of thy Saviour , and tasted a little of his ardent affection ; then wouldst thou not weigh thine own commodity

or discommodity, but wouldst rather rejoyce at slanders, when they should chance to be cast upon thee: for the love of Jesus maketh a man to despise himself. A lover of Jesus and of truth, and a true spirituall person and free from inordinate affections, can freely turn himself unto God, and lift himself above himself in spirit, and with great joy of his soul rest in God.

7. He that judgeth of all things as they are, and not as they are said and esteemed to be, is truly wise, and taught rather by God then men. He that can live spiritually, and make small reckoning of outward things, neither requireth places, nor attendeth times for performing of devout exercises. A spirituall man quickly recollecteth himself: because he never yieldeth over himself wholly to outward things. He is not hindred by outward labour or businesse which may be necessary for the time: but as things fall out, so he frameth him-

himself unto them. He that hath well ordered and disposed all things within, careth little for the vain inventions and perverse inclinations of men. So much is a man hindered and distracted, how much he draweth matters unto himself.

8. If all went well with thee, and thou hadst thy heart well purged all things would fall out to thy good and profit. But many things displease and often trouble thee, because thou art not yet perfectly dead unto thy self, nor free from the affection of earthly things. Nothing so defileth and intangleth the heart of man, as the impure love to creatures. If thou refuse outward comfort, thou wilt be able to contemplate the things of heaven, and often receive internall joy.

CHAP. II.

Of humble submission.

REspect not much who is with thee, or who is against thee. Endeavour and take care that God may be for thee in every thing thou doest. Have a good conscience and God will defend thee. For whom God will help, no malice of man can hurt. If thou canst hold thy peace and suffer, without doubt thou shalt see that our Lord will help thee. He knoweth the time and manner how to deliver thee, and therefore thou oughtest to resign thy self unto him. It belongs to God to help, and to deliver from all shame. Oftentimes it is very profitable for the better keeping of humility, that others know and reprehend our faults.

2. When a man humbleth himself for his faults, then he easily pacifieth others, and quickly satisfieth those that are offended with him.
God

God protecteth and delivereth the humble; he loveth and comforteth the humble: unto the humble man he inclineth himself: unto the humble he giveth great grace; and after his humiliation he raiseth him unto glory. Unto the humble he revealeth his secrets, and sweetly draweth and inviteth him unto himself. The humble person though he suffer much outward affliction is in peace; for that he resteth in God, and relieth not on the world. Do not think that thou hast profited any thing, unlesse thou esteem thy self inferiour to all.

CHAP. III.

Of a good and peaceable man.

First keep thy self in peace, and then mayst thou pacifie others. A peaceable man doth more good then he that is well learned. A passionate man turneth good into evil, and easily believeth the worst. A good peaceable man turneth all

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things into good. He that is well in peace is not suspicious of any. But he that is discontented and troubled is tossed with divers suspicions: he is neither quiet himself, nor suffereth others to be quiet. He often speaketh that which he ought not to speak; and omitteth that which were more expedient for him to do. He considereth what others are bound to do; and neglecteth that which he is bound to himself. First therefore have a carefull zeal over thy self, and then thou mayst justly shew thy self zealous of thy neighbours good.

2. Thou knowest well how to excuse and colour thine own deeds, and thou wilt not receive the excuses of others. It were more meet that thou diddest accuse thy self, and excusest thy brother. If thou wilt be born with all, bear also with another. Behold how farre off thou art yet from true charity and humility, which knoweth not how to be angry with any, or to be moved with

with indignation but onely against himself. It is no great matter to converse with the good, and those that are of a gentle disposition; for that is naturally pleasing to all, and every one willingly enjoyeth peace, and loveth those best that agree with him. But to be able to live peaceably with the unquiet, and perverse minds, or with the disorderly, or such as contradict us, is a great grace and very commendable.

3. Some there are that keep themselves in peace, and are in peace also with others. And there are some that neither are in peace themselves, nor suffer others to be in peace: they are troublesome to others, but alwayes more troublesome to themselves. And others there are that keep themselves in peace, and labour to bring others unto peace. Our whole peace in this miserable life consisteth rather in humble suffering, then in not feeling adversities. He that can best tell how to suffer, will best keep himself in peace.

peace. He is a conquerour of himself, a Lord of the world, friend of Christ, and heir of heaven.

CHAP. IV.

Of a pure mind, and upright intention.

With two wings man is lifted up from earthly vanities; that is, with simplicity and purity. Simplicity ought to be in our intention: Purity in our affection. Simplicity fixeth the eyes of the soul in God: Purity apprehendeth and tasteth his sweetness. No good action will hinder thee, if thou be inwardly free from inordinate affection. If thou intend and seek nothing else but the will of God and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt enjoy internall liberty. If thy heart were sincere and upright, then every creature would be unto thee a looking glasse of life, and a book of holy doctrine. There is no creature so little and abject that representeth not the goodnesse of God. 2. If

2. If in thine own heart thou wert good and pure, then thou wouldest be able to see and understand all things without any impediment. A pure heart penetrateth heaven, and pierceth the depth of hell. Such as every one is inwardly, so he judgeth outwardly. If there be joy in the world, surely a man of a pure heart possesseth it. And if there be any where tribulation and affliction, an evil conscience feels it. As iron put into the fire loseth his rust, and becometh bright like fire: so he that wholly turneth himself unto God, becometh fervent, and is changed into a new man.

3. When one beginneth to wax cold, then he is afraid of a small labour, and willingly receiveth external comfort. But when he once beginneth to overcome himself perfectly, and to walk manfully in the way of God: then he esteemeth those things to be light, which before seemed grievous unto him.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the consideration of ones self.

WE cannot trust much to our selves, for that grace oftentimes and understanding is wanting. There is but little light in us, and that which we have we quickly lose by our negligence. And oftentimes we do not perceive our own inward blindnesse. We often do evil and excuse it worse. We are sometimes moved with passion, and we think it to be zeal. We reprehend small things in others, and passe over greater matters in our selves. We quickly feel and weigh what we suffer at the hands of others: but we mind not what others suffer from us. He that doth well and deeply consider his own works, will find little cause to judge hardly of another.

2. A spirituall man preferreth the care of himself, before all other cares. And he that diligently attendeth unto himself, doth seldome
speak

II. speak much of others. Thou wilt never be recollected and devout, unless thou passe over other mens matters with silence, and look especially to thy self. If thou attend wholly unto God and thy self, thou wilt be little moved with whatsoever thou seest abroad. Where art thou, when thou art not with thy self? And when thou hast runne over all, what hast thou then profited, if thou dost neglect thy self? If thou desirest peace of mind and true union, thou must esteem little of all earthly things, and look onely to thy self.

3. Thou shalt therefore profite much if thou keep thy self free from all temporall cares. Thou shalt hinder thy self greatly, if thou esteem any thing of this world. Let nothing be great unto thee, nothing high, nothing gratefull, nothing acceptable, but onely God himself, purely, or that which is for God. Esteem all comfort vain which thou receivest from any creature. A
soul

soul that loveth God, despiseth all things that be inferiour unto God. God alone is everlasting, and of infinite greatnesse, filling all creatures: the comfort of the soul, and the true joy of the heart.

CHAP. VI.

Of the comfort of a good conscience.

THe glory of a good man, is the testimony of a good conscience. Have a good conscience, and thou shalt ever have joy. A good conscience is able to bear much, and is chearfull in adversities. An evil conscience is alwayes fearfull and unquiet. Thou shalt rest sweetly, if thy heart do not reprehend thee. Do thou never rejoyce, but when thou hast done well. Sinners have never true mirth, nor feel inward peace: because there is no peace to the impious, saith our Lord. And if they should say, We are in peace, no evil shall fall upon us, and who shall

shall dare to hurt us? believe them not: for upon a sudden will arise the wrath of God, and their deeds shall be turned into nothing, and their conceits shall perish.

2. To glory in tribulation is no hard thing for him that loveth. For to glory so, is to glory in the Crosse of our Lord. That glory is short, which is given and received from men. Sorrow alwayes accompanieth the glory of the world. The glory of the good is in their consciences, and not in the tongues of men. The gladnesse of the just is of God, and in God: and their joy is of the truth. He that desireth true and everlasting glory, careth not for that which passeth away with time. And he that seeketh temporall glory, or contemneth it not from his heart, sheweth himself but little to esteem of the glory of heaven. He enjoyeth great tranquillity and peace of mind, that careth neither for the praises, nor dispraises of men.

3. He

3. He will easily be content and pacified, whose conscience is pure. He is not the more holy, though thou commend him: nor the more abject though thou dispraise him. What thou art, that thou art: neither canst thou be truly said to be greater, then what thou art in the sight of God. If thou consider what thou art within thee, thou wilt not care what men say of thee. Man seeth in the face, but God looketh into the heart. Man considereth the deeds, but God weigheth the intention. To do alwayes well, and to esteem little of himself, is a token of an humble mind. To refuse to be comforted by any creature, is a signe of great puritie, and inward confidence.

4. He that seeketh no outward witnesse for himself, doth shew that he hath wholly committed himself unto God. For not he that commendeth himself, the same is approved (saith S. Paul) but whom God commendeth. To walk inwardly

wardly with God, and not to be possessed with any outward affection, is the state of an inward and spirituall man.

CHAP. VII.

Of the love of Jesus above all things.

Blessed is he that understandeth what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himself for Jesus. Thou oughtest to leave thy beloved, for thy beloved; for that Jesus will be beloved alone above all things. The love of things created is deceitfull and unconstant: the love of Jesus is faithfull and constant. He that cleaveth unto creatures shall fall with that which is subject to fall. He that imbraceth Jesus shall stand firmly for ever. Love him, and keep him for thy friend, who when all go away, will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end. Thou must once be left of men, whether thou wilt or no.

2. Live

2. Live and die with Jesus; and commit thy self unto his trust, who when all fail can alone help thee. Thy beloved is of that nature, that he will none of that which appertaineth to others : but will have thy heart alone, and sit like a King in his own throne. If thou couldst purge thy self perfectly of all creatures, Jesus would willingly dwell with thee. Whatsoever thou puttest in men, out of Jesus, is all no better then lost. Trust not nor relie upon a reed full of wind : for that all flesh is as hay, and all the glory thereof shall wither away as the flower of the field

3. Thou shalt quickly be deceived, if thou look onely to the outward shew of men. And if in them thou seekest thy comfort and profit, thou shalt often feel losse. If thou seekest Jesus in all things, thou shalt surely find Jesus. But if thou seekest thy self, thou shalt also find thy self, but to thy own harm. For man doth more hurt himself.
if

if he seek not Jesus, then the whole world, and all his adversaries could annoy him.

CHAP. VIII.

Of familiar conversation with Jesus.

WHEN Jesus is present, all is well; and nothing seemeth difficult: but when Jesus is absent, every thing is hard. When Jesus speaketh not inwardly unto us, our comfort is nothing worth: but if Jesus speak but one word, we feel much consolation. Did not Mary Magdalen presently rise from the place where she wept, when Martha said unto her, Thy master is here, and calleth thee? Happy is the houre when Jesus calleth from tears to spirituall joy. How drie and hard art thou without Jesus? How foolish and vain if thou desire any thing out of Jesus? Is not this a greater losse, then if thou shouldst lose the whole world?

2. What

2. What can the world profit thee without Jesus? To be without Jesus is a grievous hell; and to be with Jesus is a sweet Paradise. If Jesus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee. He that findeth Jesus, findeth a good treasure, yea a good above all goods. And he that loseth Jesus loseth too much, and more then the whole world. He is most poore that liveth without Jesus: and he most rich that is well with Jesus.

3. It is great skill to know how to converse with Jesus, and great wisdom to know how to keep Jesus. Be humble and peaceable, and Jesus will be with thee. Be devout and quiet, and Jesus will stay with thee. Thou mayest drive away Jesus and lose his grace, if thou givest thy self to outward things. And if thou shouldest drive him from thee, and lose him unto whom wilt thou flie, and what friends wilt thou then seek? Without a friend thou canst not well live: and if Jesus be not
above

above all a friend unto thee; thou shalt be too too sorrowfull and desolate. Thou doest therefore foolishly, if thou doest trust or rejoyce in any other. It is better for thee to have all the world against thee, then Jesus offended with thee. Amongst all things therefore that be dear unto thee, let Jesus alone be thy chiefest beloved.

4. Love all for Jesus, but Jesus for himself. Jesus Christ alone is especially to be beloved; who alone is found to be good, and faithfull above all friends. For him, and in him, let aswell friends as foes be dear unto thee; and all these are to be prayed for, that all may know and love him. Never desire to be singularly commended or beloved, for that appertaineth onely unto God, who hath none like unto himself. Neither do thou desire that the heart of any should be set on thee, nor do thou set thy heart on the love of any: but let Jesus be in thee, and in every virtuous and good man.

5. Be

5. Be pure and free within, and intangle not thy heart with any creature. Thou oughtest to be as it were naked, and carry a pure heart to God, if thou wilt consider, and prove, and see how sweet our Lord is. And truly, unless thou be prevented, and drawn by his grace, thou shalt never attain to that happiness to forsake and cast away all, that thou alone maist be united to him alone. For when the grace of God cometh unto a man, then he is strong, and nothing is hard unto him. And when it goeth away, he is poore and weak, and as it were left unto the will of whomsoever will afflict him. In this thou oughtest not to be dejected, nor despair; but to resigne thy self with all indifferencie unto the will of God, and to bear all things that befall thee for the glory of Christ: for after winter followeth summer, after night cometh day, and after a tempest, fair weather.

CHAP. IX.

Of the want of all comfort.

IT is no great matter to despise humane comfort, when we have divine. It is much and very much, to be able to want both humane and divine comfort : and for the honour and glory of God, to be willing to endure desolation of heart ; and to seek himself in nothing, nor to regard his own merit. What great matter is it, if thou be cheerefull and devout at the coming of heavenly grace ? This houre is wished for of all men. He rideth easily whom the grace of God carrieth. And what marvell if he feel not his burden who is borne up by the Almighty, and led by the greatest guide ?

2. We are alwayes willing to have something for our comfort: and a man doth hardly put off and forsake himself. The holy martyr Saint Laurence overcame the world with his Prelate: because he despised whatsoever seemed delightsome in

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the

the world, & for the love of Christ he patiently suffered the high Priest of God S. Sixtus to be taken from him, whom he most dearly loved. He overcame therefore the love of man by the love of the Creatour; and he rather chose the divine pleasure, then humane comfort. See thou also learn to forsake some necessary thing, and a beloved friend for the love of God. Be not grieved when thou art forsaken by a friend, knowing that we all at length must be separated one from another.

3. A man must fight long, and with a constant mind, before he get the victory, and be able to place his whole heart in God. When a man trusteth in himself, he easily slideth unto humane comforts. But a true lover of Christ, and a diligent follower of virtue, giveth not himself to such solace, nor seeketh sensible sweetnesse; but rather forcible exercises, and to sustain hard labours for Christ.

4. When therefore spirituall comfort

fort is given thee from God, receive it thankfully : but know that it is the gift of God , not any desert of thine. Be not puffed up, joy not too much , neither do thou presume vainly ; but be rather the more humble for that grace, and more wary and fearfull in all thine actions, for that houre will passe away, and temptation will succeed. When consolation is taken from thee, despair not presently ; but with humility and patience attend the heavenly visitation : for God is able again to give thee greater consolation. This is not new, nor strange unto them that have experience in the way of God : for in the great Saints and ancient Prophets, there was oftentimes such kind of alteration.

5. For which cause one when he had grace, said, I said in my prosperity I shall never be moved everlastingly. But when this was gone from him, he addeth what he found in himself, saying, Thou

turnedst thy face from me; and I became troubled. Yet doth he not despair in the midst of these changes, but more earnestly prayeth unto our Lord, and saith, Unto thee, O Lord, I will cry, and I will pray unto my God. Lastly, he receiveth the fruit of his prayer, and witnesseth that he was heard, saying, Our Lord hath heard me, and taken pity on me: our Lord is become my helper. But wherein? Thou hast turned, saith he, my sorrow into joy, and thou hast compassed me about with gladnesse. If great Saints have been so dealt withall, we that are weak and poore ought not to despair, if we be sometimes fervent and sometimes cold: for the Spirit cometh and goeth, according to the good pleasure of his will. For which cause blessed Job saith, Thou visitest him early in the morning, and suddenly thou provest him.

6. Whereupon therefore can I hope, or wherein ought I to trust, but in the great mercy of God alone.

lone, and in the only hope of heavenly grace? For whether I enjoy the presence of good men or devout brethren, or faithfull friends, or holy books, or learned treatises, or sweet songs and hymns, all these help little, and have little savour, when grace forsaketh me, and I remain left in mine own poverty. At such a time there is no better remedy then patience, and the resigning of my self unto the will of God.

7. I never found any so religious and devout, that hath not had sometimes a with-drawing of grace, or felt not a decrease of fervour. There was never Saint so highly rapt, and illuminated, who first or last was not tempted. For he is not worthy of the high contemplation of God, who hath not been exercised with some tribulation for Gods sake. For temptation going before, is wont to be a signe of ensuing comfort. And unto those that are proved by temptations, heavenly comfort is promised. He that shall overcome,

come, saith he, I will give him to eat of the tree of life.

8. But divine comfort is given, that a man may be stronger to bear adversities. There followeth also temptation, lest we should wax proud of that good. The devil sleeperh not, neither is our flesh as yet dead. Therefore cease not to prepare thy self to the battel : for on thy right hand and on thy left are enemies that never rest.

CHAP. X.

Of thankfulnessse for the grace of God.

WHy seekest thou rest, since thou art born to labour? Dispose thy self to patience, rather then to comfort : and to the bearing of the crosse, rather then to gladnesse. What secular person is there, that would not willingly receive spirituall joy and comfort, if he could alwayes have it? Spirituall comforts exceed all the delights of the world,
and

and all the pleasures of the flesh. All worldly delights are either vain or unclean: but spirituall delights are onely pleasant and honest, produced by virtues, and infused by God into pure hearts. But no man can alwayes enjoy these divine comforts according to his desire: for the time of temptation is not long away.

2. False freedome of mind, and great trust of our selves is very contrary to heavenly visitations. God doth well in giving grace; but man doth evil in not returning it again wholly unto God with thanksgiving. And therefore the gifts of grace, cannot flow in us, because we are ungratefull to the giver: and return them not wholly to the head-fountain. For grace ever attendeth him that is thankfull: and from the proud shall be taken that which is wont to be given to the humble.

3. I desire not that consolation that taketh from me compunction:

nor that contemplation which breedeth a haughty mind. For all that is high is not holy ; nor all that is sweet, good ; nor every desire pure ; nor every thing that is dear unto us, is gratefull to God. I do willingly accept of that grace, whereby I may ever become more humble and fearfull, and be made more ready and able to forsake my self. He that is taught by the gift of grace, and by the scourge of the withdrawing thereof ; will not dare to attribute any good to himself, but will rather acknowledge himself poore and naked. Give unto God that which is Gods, and ascribe unto thy self that which is thine own ; that is, give thanks to God for his grace, and acknowledge that nothing is to be attributed to thee, but onely sinne and the punishment due thereunto.

4. Content thy self, and desire alwaies the meanest and lowest things, and the highest shall be given thee : for the highest stand not without

without the lowest. The highest Saints before God, are the least in their own judgements. And how much the more glorious, so much the humbler within themselves. Those that are full of truth and heavenly glory, are not desirous of the vain glory of this world. Those that are firmly settled and grounded in God, can no way be proud. And they that ascribe all unto God, what good soever they have received, seek not glory one of another, but would have that glory which is from God alone: and desire above all things to praise God in himself, and in all the Saints, and alwayes tend unto the same.

5. Be therefore gratefull for the least gift, and thou shalt be made worthy to receive greater. Let the least be unto thee also as the greatest: and the most contemptible as an especiall gift. If thou consider the worth of the giver, no gift will seem little, or of mean esteem. For it is not little that is given by the

sovereigne Majesty of God. Yea, if he should give punishment and stripes it ought to be gratefull; for that he doeth is alwayes for our salvation, whatsoever he permitteth to happen unto us. He that desireth to keep the grace of God, let him be thankfull for the grace given, and patient for the taking away thereof. Let him pray that it may return. Let him be wary and humble lest he lose it.

CHAP. XI.

*How few the lovers of the Crosse
of Christ are.*

Jesus hath now many lovers of his heavenly kingdome, but few bearers of his Crosse. He hath many desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence. All desire to rejoyce with him, few will suffer any thing for him, or with him. Many follow Jesus unto the breaking of bread:

bread : but few to the drinking of the cup of his passion. Many reverence his miracles, few follow the ignominy of his Crosse. Many love Jesus as long as adversities happen not. Many praise and blesse him, as long as they receive any comfort from him. But if Jesus hide himself, and leave them but a while, they fall either into complaint, or into too much dejection of mind.

2. But they that love Jesus for Jesus, and not for some comfort of their own, blesse him in all tribulation and anguish of heart, as well as in the greatest comfort. And although he should never give them comfort, they notwithstanding would ever praise him, and alwayes give him thanks.

3. O how powerfull is the pure love of Jesus, which is mixed with no self-love nor proper interest! Are they not all to be called hirelings, that ever seek comforts? Do they not shew themselves to be rather lovers of themselves then of Christ, that

that alwayes think of their commoditie and gain? Where may one be found that will serve God, without looking for reward?

4. It is hard to find any one so spirituall that is free from the love of all earthly things. For where is any that is indeed poore in spirit, and free from all affection of creatures? Farre hence, and from the end of the world is his place. If a man should give all his wealth, yet is it nothing. And if he should suffer much, yet is it little. And if he should attain to all knowledge, he is yet farre off. And if he should have great virtue, and very fervent devotion, yet there is much wanting: to wit, one thing, which is most necessary for him. What is that? That leaving all, he forsake himself, and go perfectly from himself, and retain nothing of self-love. And when he hath done all that he knoweth to be done, let him think that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not weigh that much
which

which might be much esteemed; but according to truth, let him affirm himself to be an unprofitable servant, as our Saviour hath said, When you shall have done all things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants. They may be truly poore in spirit and naked, and say with the Prophet, I am alone and poore: yet no man richer, no man more powerfull, no man more free then he that can leave himself and all things, and put himself in the meanest and lowest place.

CHAP. XII.

Of the high way of the holy-Crosse.

UNTO many seemeth hard this speech, Denie thy self, take up thy Crosse, and follow Jesus. But it will be much harder to hear that last word, Get ye away from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire. For they that now willingly hear and follow the word of the Crosse, shall
not

not then fear to hear the sentence of everlasting damnation. This signe of the Crosse shall be in heaven, when our Lord shall come to judgement. Then all the servants of the Crosse, who in their life time conformed themselves unto Christ crucified, shall draw near unto our Lord with great confidence.

2. Why therefore fearest thou to take up the Crosse, which leadeth thee to a Kingdome. In the Crosse is health, in the Crosse is life, in the Crosse is protection against our enemies, in the Crosse is infusion of heavenly sweetnesse, in the Crosse is strength of mind, in the Crosse is joy of spirit, in the Crosse is the height of virtue, in the Crosse is the perfection of sanctitie. There is no health of the soul, nor hope of everlasting life but in the Crosse. Take up therefore thy Crosse and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting. He is gone before, bearing his Crosse, and is dead for thee

thee on the Crosse ; that thou mayest also bear thy Crosse , and desire to die on the Crosse with him. For if thou dyest with him, thou shalt also live with him. And if thou be his companion in pain, thou shalt be partaker with him also in glory.

3 Behold in the Crosse all doth consist , and all lyeth in ending our life upon it : for there is no other way unto life, and unto true inward peace , but the way of the Holy Crosse, and of dayly mortification. Go where thou wilt , seek whatsoever thou wilt , thou shalt not find a higher way above , nor a safer way below , then the way of the Holy Crosse. Dispose and order all things according to thy will and judgement : yet thou shalt ever find , that of necessitie thou must suffer somewhat , either willingly or against thy will , so as thou shalt never fully avoid the Crosse. For either thou shalt feel pain in thy bodie , or in thy soul thou shalt

shalt suffer tribulation of spirit.

4 Sometimes thou shalt be forsaken of God, sometimes thou shalt be troubled by thy neighbours: and which is more, oftentimes thou shalt be inkome to thy self: neither canst thou be delivered or eased by any remedie or comfort, but so long as pleaseth God, thou oughtest to bear it. For God will have thee learn to suffer tribulation without comfort; and that thou submit thy self wholly to him, and become more humble by tribulation. No man hath so lively a feeling of the passion of Christ, as he who hath chanced to suffer the like. The Crosse therefore is alwayes readie, and every where attendeth thee. Thou canst not escape it whithersoever thou flyest: for wheresoever thou goest, thou carriest thy self with thee, and shalt ever find thy self both above and below, without and within; which way soever thou dost turn thee, alwayes thou shalt find the Crosse: and every where
of

of necessitie thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and deserve an everlasting Crown.

5. If thou bear the Crosse willingly, it will bear thee, and lead thee to thy desired end: to wit, where there shall be an end of suffering, though here there shall not. If thou bear it unwillingly, thou makest for thy self a new burden and increasest thy load, and yet notwithstanding thou must bear it. If thou cast away one Crosse, without doubt thou shalt find another, and that perhaps a more heavy.

6. Thinkest thou to escape that which no man could ever avoid? which of the Saints in the world was without crosses, and tribulation? Verily Iesus Christ our Lord was never one houre without pain of suffering, so long as he lived. Christ (saith he) ought to suffer, and rise again from death, and so to enter into his glory: and how dost thou seek any other way, then

then this high way, which is the way of the holy Crosse?

7. The whole life of Christ was a Crosse and Martyrdome: and dost thou seek rest and joy? Thou art deceived, thou art deceived, if thou seekest any other thing then to suffer tribulation: for this whole mortall life is full of miseries, and environed on every side with crosses. And how much the more one hath profited in spirit, so much the heavier crosses he oftentimes findeth: for the love he beareth to God increaseth the grief which he endureth for his banishment.

8. But yet this man, though so many wayes afflicted, is not without the remedy of spirituall consolation, for the great good which he perceiveth to grow unto him by the bearing of his Crosse. For whilest he willingly putteth himself under it, all the burden of tribulation is turned into the confidence of divine comfort. And how much the more the flesh is wasted by affliction, so much

much the more is the spirit strengthened by inward grace. And sometimes he is so comforted with the desire of tribulation, and adversitie, for the love of conforming himself to the Crosse of Christ, that he would not wish at any time to be without sorrow and tribulation: because he believeth that so much the more gratefull he shall be unto God, how much the more he can suffer for him. This is not a work of humane virtue, but it is the grace of Christ, that can, and doth so much in frail flesh, that what naturally it alwayes abhorreth and flyeth, that by fervour of spirit, it taketh hold on and loveth.

9. It is not according to mans inclination to bear the Crosse, to love the Crosse, chastise and subdue the body, to flie honours, to suffer contumelies with a joyfull heart, to despise himself, and to wish to be despised, to bear all adversities and damages, and to desire no prosperitie in this world. If
thou

thou considerest thy self, thou shalt not
 be able to perform no such matter
 thy self. But if thou trustest in our
 Lord, strength shall be given thee
 from heaven, and the world and
 flesh shall be made subject to thy
 command. Neither shalt thou fear
 thy enemy the Devil, if thou be
 armed with faith, and signed with
 the Crosse of Christ.

10. Resolve therefore with thy
 self, like a good and faithfull ser-
 vant of Christ, to bear manfully
 the Crosse of thy Lord, who was
 crucified for thy love. Prepare thy
 self to bear many adversities and
 divers kinds of troubles in this mi-
 serable life: for so it will be with
 thee, wheresoever thou be, and so
 surely thou wilt find it, wheresoever
 thou hide thy self. So it must be,
 and there is no remedie or means
 to avoid tribulation and sorrow,
 but to bear them. Drink of the cup
 of our Lord willingly, if thou wilt
 be his friend, and desirest to have
 part with him. Leave the desire of

com-

comforts to God : let him do
therein as shall best please him.
Setteth thou thy heart upon the suffer-
ing of tribulations, and account
them the greatest comforts : for
that the passions of this life are
not condigne to future glory,
although thou alone couldst suffer
them all.

11. When thou shalt come to
this estate, that tribulation shall
seem sweet and pleasant unto thee
for Christ : then thou maist think
it is well with thee, for thou hast
found a Paradise upon earth. As
long as it is grievous to thee to
suffer, and that thou desirest to
flee it ; so long shalt thou be ill at
ease: and the tribulation thou flyest
will follow thee every where.

12. If thou settlest thy self to
that thou oughtest to wit, to suffer,
and to die to thy self, it will quickly
be better with thee, and thou shalt
find peace. Although thou should-
est have been rapt even unto the
third heaven with S. Paul, thou art
not

not for this assured , that thou shalt suffer no contradiction. I (saith Jesus) will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name. It reflecteth therefore , that thou suffer , if thou wilt love Jesus , and perpetually serve him.

13. O, would to God, thou wert worthy to suffer something for Jesus ! how great glory would it be unto thee , what joy to all the Saints of God , how great edification also to thy neighbour ! For all do commend patience , though few desire to suffer. With great reason thou oughtest to be willing to suffer a little for Christ; since many suffer farre greater things for the love of the world.

14. Know for certain that thou oughtest to lead a dying life. And how much the more every one dieth to himself ; so much the more doth he begin to live to God. No man is fit to attain unto heavenly things unless he submit himself to the bearing of adversities for Christ.

Christ. Nothing is more gratefull unto God, nothing more wholesome to thee in this world, then to suffer willingly for Christ. And if it were in thy choice, thou shouldest rather wish to suffer adversities for Christ, then to enjoy the delight of many comforts: because by these means thou shouldest be more like unto Christ, and more conformable to all the Saints. For our good works, and the perfection of our estate consisteth not in much sweetnesse and comfort; but rather in suffering great afflictions and tribulation.

15. If there had been any better thing, and more profitable to the health of man then suffering, surely Christ would have shewed it by word, and example. But he plainly exhorted all the Disciples that followed him, and all that desire to follow him, to the bearing of the Crosse and saith, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his Crosse, and

and follow me. So as when we have read and searched all, let this be the last conclusion, That by many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdome of God.

THE THIRD BOOK.

CHAP. I.

Of the inward speech of Christ unto a faithfull soul.

I Will hear what our Lord God will speak in me. Blessed is the soul that heareth our Lord speaking in her, and receiveth from his mouth the word of comfort. Blessed are those eares that receive the sound of the divine voice, and listen not to the whisperings of the world. Blessed indeed are those eares that hearken not to the voice which soundeth outwardly, but unto truth which teach-

teacheth inwardly. Blessed indeed are the eyes that being shut up to outward things, are attentive to those things that are internall. Blessed are they that enter into the inward things, and endeavour to prepare themselves more and more by dayly exercises to the attaining of heavenly secrets. Blessed be they that delight to attend to the service of God, and cast from them all impediments of the world.

2. Consider these things, my soul, and shut up the doore of thy sensuall desires, that thou maist hear what thy Lord God speaketh in thee. Thus saith thy Beloved, I am thy safety, thy peace, and thy life. Keep thy self with me, and thou shalt find peace. Forsake all transitorie things and seek those that be everlasting. What are temporall things, but deceiving snares? and what do all creatures avail thee, if thou be forsaken by the Creatour? Forsake therefore all earthly things and labour to please

thy Creatour, and be faithfull unto him, that thou maist attain unto true happineſſe.

CHAP. II.

*That truth ſpeaketh inwardly with-
out noiſe of words.*

SPeak Lord, for thy ſervant hear-
eth: I am thy ſervant, grant me
underſtanding, that I may know
thy teſtimonies. Stirre up my heart
to heare the words of thy mouth.
Let thy ſpeech deſcend as the dew
into my ſoul. The children of
Iſrael in times paſt ſaid unto Moy-
ſes, Speak thou unto us, and we
ſhall hear thee: Let not our Lord
ſpeak unto us, leſt perhaps we die.
Not ſo Lord, not ſo, I beſeech thee.
But rather with the Prophet Sa-
muel, I humbly and earneſtly in-
treat, Speak Lord, for thy ſervant
heareth. Let not Moſes ſpeak unto
me, nor any of the Prophets, but
thou rather ſpeak, my Lord God,
the inſpirer and enlightner of all
the

the Prophets: for thou alone without them canst perfectly instruct me, but they without thee can profit nothing.

2. They can pronounce words, but they give not spirit. They speak marvelous well, but if thou hold thy peace, they inflame not the heart. They deliver the letters, but thou openest the sense. They bring forth mysteries, but thou disclovest the understanding of sealed things. They declare thy commandments, but thou helpst to fulfill them. They shew the way, but thou givest strength to walk in it. They work onely exteriourly, but thou instructest and enlightenest the hearts. They water outwardly, but thou givest fruitfulness. They sound forth words, but thou givest understanding to the hearing.

3. Let not therefore Moses speak unto me, but thou my Lord God, the everlasting truth; lest perhaps I should die, and become without fruit, if I be warmed outwardly

only and not inflamed within; lest the word heard and not fulfilled, known and not loved, believed and not observed, should increase my judgement. Speak therefore Lord, for thy servant heareth, for thou hast the words of everlasting life. Speak unto me to the comfort of my soul, and to the amendment of my whole life, and to thy praise and glory, and everlasting honour.

CHAP. III.

That the words of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

Sonne hear my words, words of great comfort, excelling all the knowledge of the Philosophers and wise men of this world. My words are spirit and life, not to be weighed by the understanding of man. They are not to be drawn to vain liking, but to be heard with silence,
and

and to be received with all humility and great affection: And I said, Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach thy law, that thou mayest give him quietnesse from evil dayes, and that he be not destroyed upon earth.

2.1 (saith our Lord) have taught the Prophets from the beginning, and cease not continually to speak to every one: but many are deaf, and give no eare to my speech. The greater number do more willingly listen to the world, then to God: and follow sooner the desires of their flesh, then the will of God. The world promiseth temporall and small things, and is served with great diligence: I promise most high and eternall things, and the hearts of men are nothing moved with it. Who is he that serveth and obeyeth me with equal care to that with which the world, and the Lords thereof are served? Blush Sidon, saith the seer. And if thou ask

therefore, hear wherefore: For a little Prebend a long journey is undertaken; for everlasting life many will scarce once lift a foot from the ground. A thing of small value is sought after greedily: for a penny sometimes there is great contention: for a vain thing and sleight promise men consent to toil day and night.

3. But (alas) for an unchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honour and glory without end, they are loth to take the least pains. Blush therefore fleshfull and complaining servant, that they are found more readie to destruction, then thou to life. They rejoyce more at vanity, then thou at truth. And yet they are sometimes frustrated of their hope: but my promise deceiveth none, nor sendeth him away emptie that trusteth in me. I will give that which I have promised. I will fulfill that which I have said; but to him that remains faithfull in my
love

love to the end. I am the reward of all good, and do trie my devout servants in forcible proofs.

4. Write my words in thy heart, and think diligently of them: for they will be necessarie in time of temptation. What thou understandest not when thou readest, thou shalt know in the day of visitation. I am wont to visit my elect two severall wayes, to wit, with temptation, and comfort. And I dayly reade two lessons unto them, one reprehending their vices, another exhorting them to the increase of virtues. He that hath my words and despiseth them, hath within himself that shall judge him at the last day.

A prayer to implore the grace of devotion.

5. O Lord my God, thou art all that I can desire. Who am I, that dare speak unto thee? I am thy poorest servant, and a most vile

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worm;

worm; much more poore and contemptible then I can or dare expresse. Remember Lord, that I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing. Thou alone art good, just, and holy: thou canst do all things, performest all things, leaving onely a sinner void of all good. Call to mind thy mercies, and fill my heart with thy grace, who wilt not that thy works be void.

6. How can I support my self in this miserable life, unless thy mercy and grace comfort me? Turn not thy face from me: delay not thy visitation; draw not away thy comfort, lest my soul become as earth without water unto thee. Lord teach me to fulfill thy will; teach me to live worthily, and humbly in thy sight; for thou art my wisdom, thou dost perfectly know me, and didst know me before the world was made, and before I was born into the world.

C H A P. I V.

*That we ought to live in truth and
humility in the sight of God.*

Sonne walk in my sight in sincerity and truth; and ever seek me in plainnesse of heart. He that walketh in my sight in truth, shall be defended from evil incursions, and truth shall deliver him from seducers, and from the detractions of the wicked. If truth shall have delivered thee, thou shalt be truly free, and shalt not care for vain speeches of men. Lord, it is true. According as thou saist, so I beseech thee let it be done with me, and keep me, and bring me to a happie end. Let thy truth teach me, and let it deliver me from all evil affection and inordinate love: and I shall walk with thee in great freedome of heart.

2. I will teach thee (saith the Truth) those things that are right and pleasing in my sight. Think of

thy finnes with great sorrow, and grief, and never esteem thy self any thing for thy good works. Thou art in very deed a sinner, and subject to many passions. Of thy self thou always tendest to nothing, and art quickly cast down and overcome; quickly troubled, quickly dissolved. Thou hast nothing wherein thou canst glory, but many things for which thou oughtest to humble, and despise thy self? for thou art much weaker then thou art able to comprehend.

3. And therefore let nothing seem much unto thee whatsoever thou doest. Let nothing seem great, nothing precious, and wonderfull, nothing worthy of estimation, nothing high, nothing truly commendable, and to be desired, but that which is everlasting. Let the eternall Truth above all things please thee. Let thy own great unworthinesse alwayes displease thee. Fear nothing, blame, and shie nothing so much as thy finnes, and vices:

vices : which ought to displease more then the losse of any thing whatsoever. Some walk not sincerely in my sight but led by a certain curiositie and pride, will know my secrets, and understand the high mysteries of God, neglecting themselves and their own salvation. These oftentimes (for that I resist them) do fall into great temptation and sinnes, for their pride and curiositie.

4. Fear the judgements of God, dread the wrath of the Almighty. But discusse not the works of the Highest. Search thine own iniquities, in how much thou hast offended, and how much good thou hast neglected. Some carry their devotion onely in books, some in pictures, some in outward signes and figures, some have me in their mouthes, but little in their hearts. There are others that being illuminated in their understanding and purged in their affection do alwayes aspire with an earnest mind to everlasting

lasting happinesse , and are unwilling to heare of the things of this world , and do serve the necessities of nature with grief: and these perceive what the spirit of truth speaketh in them. Because it teacheth them to despise earthly , and love heavenly things : to neglect the world , and day and night to desire heaven.

C H A P. V.

Of the wonderfull effect of divine grace.

I Praise thee , O heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, for that thou hast vouchsafed to remember me a poore and wretched creature. O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, thanks be unto thee , who sometimes with thy comfort refreshest me unworthie of all comfort. I ever blesse and glorifie thee with thy onely begotten Sonne . and the holy Ghost for all worlds. O God my Lord, be holy lover

lover of my soul, when thou shalt come into my heart, all that is within me will rejoyce. Thou art my glory and the exultation of my heart. Thou art my hope and refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. But for that I am yet weak in love, and imperfect in virtue, I have need to be comforted by thee: visit me therefore often, and instruct me with thy holy discipline. Deliver me from evil passions, & heal my heart of all inordinate affections: that being cured within and well purged, I may be made fit to love, strong to suffer, and constant to persevere.

3. Love is a great matter, in very truth a great good; which alone maketh every thing that is heavy, light; and beareth equally unequal burdens. For it carrieth a burden without a burden, and maketh every thing that is bitter, sweet and delightful. The noble love of Jesus inforceth man to work great things, and stirreth him up to desire alwayes the most perfect. Love
will

will be aloft, and not kept down with any base thing. Love will be free from all worldly affection, to the end his inward sight be not obscured, that he be not entangled with the desire of any transitory gain, or troubled with the want thereof. Nothing is sweeter then love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more ample, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in heaven or in earth; for that love hath his beginning from God, and cannot rest but in God above all creatures.

4. He that loveth, flyeth, runneth, and rejoiceth, he is free and not held in. He giveth all for all, and hath all in all, for that he resteth in one Highest above all, from which all good floweth and proceedeth. He respecteth not the gifts, but turneth himself above all goods unto the giver. Love oftentimes knoweth no measure, but inflameth above all measure. Love feeleth no burden, weigheth no pains, desireth

fireth above its strength, complaineth not of impossibility, for that it thinketh all things lawfull and possible. It is therefore able to undertake all things, and performeth and bringeth many things to effect; whereas he that doth not love, fainteth, and can do nothing.

5. Love alwayes watcheth, and sleeping sleepeth not; being wearied is not tired; straightned, is not pressed; frightened, is not troubled: but like a lively flame and burning torch, breaketh upwards, and passeth through all with great security. If any one loveth, he knoweth what this voice crieth, A loud cry in the eares of God, is the burning love of the soul, which saith, My God, my love, thou art wholly mine, and I wholly thine.

6. Enlarge me in love, that my heart may taste how sweet it is to love, and to be dissolved, and swim in thy love. Let me be possessed by love, mounting above my self, with excessive fervour and admiration.

Let

Let me sing the song of love, let me follow thee on high my beloved; let my soul faint in thy praise rejoicing with love. Let me love thee more than my self, and not my self but for thee, and all in thee that truly love thee, as the law of love commandeth which shineth in thee.

7. Love is swift, sincere, pious, sweet and delightfull, strong patient, faithfull, prudent, suffering, full of courage, and never seeking it self. For where one seeketh himself, there he falleth from love. Love is circumspect, humble, and upright: not remisse, not mutable, nor attending unto vain things; sober, chaste, constant, quiet, and guarded in all the senses. Love is subject and obedient to Superiours, mean and abject to it self, devout and thankfull unto God, trusting and hoping alwayes in him, even then when God imparteth no sweetnesse unto it: for without sorrow none liveth in love.

8. He that is not ready to suffer
all

all things, and stand to the will of his beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover. A lover ought to embrace willingly all that is hard and distastefull for his beloved; and not to turn away from him for any contrary accidents.

CHAP. VI.

Of the proof of a true Lover.

Sonne, thou art not yet a strong and prudent lover. Wherefore Lord? Because thou givest over for a small adversity, and too earnestly seekest comfort. A constant lover standeth firmly in temptations, and giveth not credit to the crafty perswasions of the enemy. As I please him in prosperity, so I am not unpleasant to him in adversity

2. A prudent lover considereth not so much the gift of his lover, as the love of the giver. He rather esteemeth the good will then the value, and placeth all gifts under his

his beloved. A noble lover resteth not in the gift, but in me above any gift. All therefore is not lost if sometimes thou hast lesse taste of me then thou wouldest. That good and sweet desire which thou sometimes feelest, is the effect of present grace, and a certain taste of the heavenly Countrey, whereon thou must not rely too much for it goeth and cometh. But to fight against evil motions of the mind which may happen unto thee, and to despise the suggestion of the devil, is a signe of virtue and great courage.

3. Let not therefore strange fancies forced into thee of any matter whatsoever, trouble thee. Retain a firm purpose and an upright intention to God. Neither is it an illusion that sometimes thou art suddenly rapt on high, and presently returnest again unto the accustomed vanities of thy heart. For thou dost rather unwillingly suffer them, then commit them : and as long as they

they displease thee and thou strivest against them, it is a gain and no losse.

4. Know that thy ancient enemy doth ever strive to hinder thy desire to good; and to divert thee from all devout exercise: to wit, from the devout memory of my passion, from the profitable remembrance of thy sinnes, from the guard of thine own heart, and from the firm purpose of profiting in virtue. He thrusteth many evil thoughts into thy mind, that he may cause a wearisomnesse and horroure in thee, to draw thee from devout prayer and reading. Humble confession is displeasing unto him; and if he could, he would cause thee to cease from receiving the Sacrament of my body. Trust him not, nor care for him, although he should often set snares of deceit to intrap thee. Charge him with it when he suggesteth evil and unclean thoughts unto thee; Say unto him, Avant filthy spirit, blush miserable wretch; thou

thou art filthy that bringest such things unto mine ears. / way from me wicked deceiver, thou shalt have no part in me : but Jesus shall be with me as a strong warriour, and thou shalt remain confounded. I had rather die, and undergo any torment then to consent unto thee. Hold thy peace and be silent; I will hear thee no more, though thou shouldest work me many troubles. My Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? If whole armies should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear, Our Lord is my helper and my redeemer.

5. Fight like a good souldier : and if thou sometimes fall through frailty, recover greater forces then before, trusting in my more abundant grace : and take great heed of vain pleasing of thy self and pride. This brings many into errour, and makes them sometimes fall into almost incurable blindness. Let the fall of the proud, foolishly presuming

suming of themselves, serve thee for a warning, and a perpetuall humiliation.

CHAP. VII.

That grace is to be hid under the veil of humility.

SOME, it is more profitable and safe for thee to hide the grace of devotion; not to extoll thy self, nor to speak much, nor to esteem much thereof: but rather to despise thy self, and fear it, as given to one unworthy thereof. This affection is not to be cleaved unto which may be quickly changed unto the contrary. Think when thou art in grace, how miserable and needy thou art wont to be without. Neither doth therein onely consist the profit of spirituall life, when thou hast the grace of comfort; but when thou humbly, resignedly, and patiently sufferest the withdrawing thereof: so that thou be not then lesse diligent in the exercise of pray-

er, nor suffer thy self to passe over the rest of thy accustomed duties; but that thou willingly perform what lieth in thee, according as thou art able and understandest to be fit: not neglecting thy self wholly for the dyuesse and trouble of mind which thou feelest.

2. There are many that when it succeedeth not well with them, presently they become impatient or slothfull. The way of man is not alwayes in his power, but it belongeth to God to give and to comfort when he will, how much he will, and whom he will, as it shall please him and no more. Some unadvised persons have overthrowen themselves for the greedy desire which they had of the grace of devotion; attempting more then they were able to perform, not weighing the measure of their weaknesse but following rather the desire of their heart, then the judgement of reason. And because they presumed on greater matters then were pleasing to God,
they

they quickly lost his grace. They were made needy, and left in a dejected estate that built themselves nests in heaven: to the end that being humbled and impoverished, they may learn not to flie with their own wings, but to live in hope under my feathers. They that are yet new, and unacquainted in the way of our Lord, unless they govern themselves by the counsel of discreet persons, may easily be deceived and quickly overthrown.

3. And if they will rather follow their own judgement, then give credit to others that are experienced, their end will be dangerous, if they cannot be drawn from their own conceit. Seldome those that are wise in their own opinion suffer themselves humbly to be governed by others. A little knowledge with humility, and a slender understanding, is better then great measures of learning with a self-liking. It is better for thee to have lesse,
then

then much of that whereof thou mayest be proud. He doth not discreetly, that wholly giveth himself over to mirth, forgetting his former povertie, and the chaste fear of God; which feareth to lose the grace which he hath obtained. Neither is he virtuously wise, that in time of adversity or any tribulation whatsoever, yieldeth to despairing thoughts, and thinketh and imagineth of me lesse confidently, then he ought.

4. He that will be over secure in time of peace, shall be often found in time of warre too dejected and fearfull. If thou couldst alwayes continue humble, and lowly within thy self, and temper, and govern thy soul well, thou shouldest not so soon fall into danger and offence. It is good counsell, that when thou conceivest fervour of spirit, thou shouldest think what will become of thee when that light shall leave thee And when that doth happen, remember the light may return again,

again, which for thy instruction and my glory have with-drawn for a time

5. Such proof is often more profitable, then if thou shouldest alwayes enjoy prosperity according to thy desire. For merits are not to be weighed in a man by the number of visions and comforts which he hath, or by his knowledge in Scripture, or by his being placed in high degree, but in that he is grounded in true humility, and replenished with divine charitie; if he alwayes purely and entirely seek the honour of God, if he esteem himself nothing, and with a sincere heart despise himself, and rejoyce more to be despised and humbled by others, then to be honoured.

CHAP. VIII.

Of a mean conceit of our selves in the sight of God.

SHall I speak unto my Lord sith
I am dust and ashes? If I e-
H steem

esteem better of my self, behold thou standest against me, and my iniquities bear true witnesse: neither can I speak against it. But if I abase and esteem nothing of my self, and cast off all self-conceit, and (as I am) account my self to be dust, thy grace will be favourable unto me, and thy light will be near unto my heart, and all estimation how little soever shall be swallowed up in the depth of my nothing, and perish everlastingly. There thou shewest my self unto me, what I am, what I have been, and whither I am come: for alas I am nothing, and I knew it not. And if I be left to my self, behold I become nothing, and a masse of infirmity. But if thou suddenly look upon me, I am presently made strong, and filled with new joy. And it is a great marvell, that I am so suddenly lifted up, and so graciously imbraced by thee, that of mine own weight, alwayes sink downward.

2. Thy

2. Thy love is cause hereof, freely preventing me, and relieving me in so many necessities, preserving me also from grievous dangers, and (as I may truly say) delivering me from innumerable evils. For surely by evil loving my self, I lost my self: and by seeking thee alone, and sincerely loving thee, I have found both my self and thee, and for thy love have more deeply brought my self to nothing. For that thou, O most sweet Jelu, dealest with me above all desert, and above all that I dare hope and request.

3. Blessed be thou my God; for although I be unworthy of all good, yet the noblenesse of thy bountie and thy infinite goodnesse never ceaseth to do good even to the ungratefull, and to them that be turned away farre from thee. Turn us unto thee, O Lord, that we may be gratefull, humble, and devout: for thou art our safetie, our power, and our strength.

CHAP. IX

*That all things are to be referred
unto God, as unto the last
end.*

SOane, I ought to be thy chiefest
and last end, if thou desire to be
truly blessed. With this intention
thy affection shall be purified which
is oftentimes inclined inordinately
to it self, and unto creatures. For if
in any thing thou seek thy self, thou
presently faintest, and driest up
within thy self. Direct therefore all
things chiefly unto me, for I am he
that have given all. Consider every
thing as flowing from the highest
good; and therefore all things are
to be reduced unto me as unto their
first beginning.

2. Out of me, as out of living
fountains, the little and the great,
the poore and the rich, do draw the
water of life: and they that willingly
and freely serve me, shall receive
grace for grace. But he that will
glory out of me, or be delighted in
any

any particular good, shall not be grounded in true joy, nor enlarged in his heart, but shall be many wayes hindered and straitned. Thou oughtest therefore to ascribe no good unto thy self, nor attribute the praise of virtue unto any man: but give all unto God, without whom man hath nothing. I have bestowed all, and will that all be returned to me again: and with great severitie I require thanks.

3. This is the truth that putteth to flight vain glory. And if heavenly grace, and true charitie enter in, there shall be no envie nor grudging of heart, neither shall there be any place for self-love. For divine charitie overcometh all, and enlargeth all the forces of the soul. If thou understand aright, in me alone thou wilt rejoyce, in me alone thou wilt hope: for none is good, but God alone, who is to be praised above all things, and to be blessed in all.

CHAP. X.

*That despising the world, it is sweet
to serve God.*

NOW I will speak again, O Lord, and will not be silent. I will say in the eares of my God, my Lord, and my King that is on high, O how great is the multitude of thy sweetnesse, O Lord, [which thou hast hidden for those that fear thee! But what art thou to them that love thee? What to them that serve thee with their whole heart? Truly unspeakable is the sweetnesse of thy contemplation, which thou bestowest on them that love thee. In this chiefly thou hast shewed me the sweetnesse of thy charitie, for that when I was not thou madest me: and when I went astray farre off from thee, thou broughtest me back again, that I might serve thee, and hast commanded me to love thee.

2. O fountain of everlasting love,
what shall I say of thee? How can
I

I forget thee, that hast vouchsafed to remember me, even when I withered away and perished ! Thou hast used mercie with thy servant beyond all the expectation of my heart : and hast bestowed thy grace and friendship beyond all merit. What shall I return unto thee for this grace ? For it is not granted to every one to forsake all things, to renounce the world, and to undertake a life of religion and perfection. Is it much that I serve thee, whom all creatures are bound to serve ? It ought not to seem much unto me, to serve thee: but this rather seemeth much and marvellous unto me, that thou vouchsafest to receive into thy service one so poore and unworthy, and so joyn him with thy beloved servants.

3. Behold, all is thine which I have, and whereby I serve thee. And yet in very deed thou rather servest me then I thee. Behold, heaven and earth which thou hast created for the service of man are ready at

H 4 hand,

hand, and do daily perform whatsoever thou dost command; and this is little: yea, thou hast also appointed the Angels to the service of man. But that which excelleth all, is, that thou thy self hast vouchsafed to serve man, and promised to give thy self unto him.

4. What shall I give thee for all these thousands of benefits? I would I could serve thee all the dayes of my life! I would I were able at least for one day, to do thee some worthy and acceptable service! Thou art truly worthy of all service, of all honour and everlasting praise. Thou art my Lord, and I thy poore servant, that am bound to serve thee with all my forces: neither ought I ever to cease to praise thee. And this I wish to do, this I desire: and whatsoever is wanting unto me, vouchsafe I beseech thee to supply.

5. It is a great honour, a very great glory to serve thee, and de pite all things for thee. For great grace shall

shall be given to them that shall willingly subject themselves to thy most holy service. They shall receive most sweet comfort of the holy Ghost, that for thy love shall renounce all carnall delights. They shall attain great freedom of mind, that for thy names sake shall enter into the narrow way, and shall have left off all care of this world.

6. O sweet and delightfull servitude of God, by which man is truly made free and holy! O sacred state of religious bondage, which maketh man equall to Angels, pleasing to God, terrible to devils, gratefull and of great esteem to all the faithfull! O service to be imbraced, and alwayes wished for, by which we obtain the greatest good, and attain to that joy which never shall have end.

CHAP. XI.

*That the desires of our heart
are to be examined and
moderated.*

Sonne, thou oughtest to learn many things more, which thou hast not yet well learned, What are those, Lord? That thou frame thy desires wholly according to my pleasure; and be not a lover of thy self, but a diligent follower of my will. Thy desires oftentimes do stirre thee up, and drive thee forwards with violence: but consider whether thou art moved rather for my honour, then for thine own profit. If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content with whatsoever I shall ordain: but if there lurk in thee any self-inclination, behold this is it that hindereth thee, and weigheth thee down.

2. Beware therefore thou incline not too much upon any desire that cometh to thy mind, before thou ask my counsel, lest perhaps afterwards,

wards it repent thee, and thou begin now to dislike that which before did please thee, & which thou earnestly desiredst as the best. For every affection that seemeth good is not presently to be followed: nor every contrary affection at the first to be fled. It is expedient sometimes to use a restraint even in good desires and endeavours, lest by importunity thou incurre distraction of mind, and by evil example become a scandal unto others; or being gain-said by others, thou be suddenly troubled and fall.

3. Yet sometimes thou oughtest to use violence, and resist manfully thy sensuall appetites, and respect not what thy body would, or would not; but rather to labour that even perforce it be subject to the spirit. And it is to be chastised so long, and to be forced under servitude, untill it readily obey in all things, and learn to be content with a little, and to be pleased with ordinary things, and
ne

166 *The Christians* Book III.
not to murmur against any inconvenience.

CHAP. XII.

*Of the effect of Patience, and
of strife against concupiscence.*

Lord God, I perceive patience is very necessary unto me : for that many adversities do happen in this life. Howsoever I shall dispose of my peace, my life cannot be without war and affliction. So it is Sonne. And my will is not that thou seek after that peace which is void of temptation, or that which feeleth no contrariety ; but then think that thou hast found peace, when thou art exercised with sundry tribulations, and tried in many adversities.

2. If thou say that thou art not able to suffer much, how then wilt thou endure the fire of hell? of two evils the lesse is alwayes to be chosen. That thou mayst therefore
avoid

avoid everlasting punishment in the next world, endeavour to suffer patiently for God the present evils of this. Dost thou think that men of this world suffer little or nothing? Thou art deceived. Look into the life even of them that live in greatest delicacies, and thou shalt find it otherwise. But thou wilt say, They have many delights, and follow their own wills, and therefore they make small account of their tribulations. Be it so, that they have whatsoever they will; but how long dost thou think it will last?

3. Behold, the wealthy of this world vanish away like smoke, and there shall be no memorie of their joyes past. Yea, even while they live also, they rest not in them without grief, irksomnesse and fear. For the self-same thing in which they take their delight is oftentimes the cause of sorrow unto them and much affliction. They have their desert, who for that they immoderately

rately seek and follow delights, they do not obtain them but with shame and sorrow.

4. O how short and deceitfull, how inordinate and filthy are those pleasures! Yea, so senselesse and blind are men that they understand it not: but like dumbe beasts, for a little pleasure of a corruptible life, they incurre the eternall death of their soul. Do not thou therefore, my Son, follow the disordinate inclinations of thy corrupt nature, but forsake thine own will. Delight in our Lord, and he will give thee the desires of thy heart.

5. If thou desire true delight, and to be more plentifully comforted by me: behold, in the contempt of all worldly things, and in the cutting off all base delights shall be thy blessings, and abundant comforts shall be given thee. And how much the more thou withdrawest thy self from all comfort of creatures, so much the sweeter and
more

more forcible consolations shalt thou find in me. But at first thou canst not attain unto them without a certain grief, labour and strife. The old custome will make resistance, and thou must overcome it with another custome that is better. Thy flesh will murmur; but thou must bridle it with fervour of spirit. The old serpent will sting and trouble thee: but by prayer he shall be put to flight, and with profitable labour thou shalt shut the doore against him.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the humble obedience of a subject, according to the example of Christ.

Sonne, he that endeavoureth to withdraw himself from obedience, withdraweth himself from grace. And he that seeketh to have things in private, shall lose the common. He that doth not willingly and freely submit himself to
his

his Superiour, it is a signe that his flesh is not perfectly obedient unto him, but oftentimes rebelleth and murmureth against him. Learn therefore readily to submit thy self to thy Superiour, if thou desirest to subdue thine own passions. For the outward enemy is sooner overcome, if the inward man be in good estate. There is no worse enemy, nor more troublesome to the soul, then thou unto thy self, not agreeing well with the spirit. Thou must of necessity have a true contempt of thy self, if thou wilt prevail against flesh and blond.

2. Because thou lovest thy self as yet too inordinately, therefore thou art afraid to resign thy self wholly to the will of others. But what great matter is it, if thou that art dust and nothing submit thy self to a man for God, when I the Almighty and highest Sovereigne who created all things of nothing, humbly submitted my self unto man for thee? I became the most
humble

humble and abject of all men, that thou mightest overcome thy pride with my humility. Learn to obey thou that art dust. Learn to humble thy self thou earth and clay, and put thy self under thee feet of all men. Learn to break thine own will, and to yield thy self to all subjection.

3. Take courage against thy self, and suffer not pride to live in thee: but humble and submit thy self to all, that every one may go over thee, and tread thee as dirt of the streets under their feet. Vain man, what canst thou complain of? what canst thou answer, foul sinner, to them that reprove thee, who hast so often offended God, and so many times deserved hell? But mine eye hath spared thee, because thy soul was precious in my sight: that thou mightest know my love and alwayes remain gratefull for my benefits: that thou mightest continually give thy self to true subjection and humility, and mightest

mightest bear patiently the contempt of thy self.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the secret judgements of God to be considered, lest we be extolled in our good deeds.

THou thunderest thy judgements over me, O Lord, and shakest all my bones with fear and trembling: my soul is sore afraid. I stand astonished, when I consider that the heavens are not pure in thy sight. If thou hast found wickedness in Angels, and hast not pardoned them, what shall become of me? Starres fell from heaven, and what do I presume that am dust? They whose works seemed laudable, fell into the lowest hell: and I have seen them, that did eat bread of Angels, to be delighted with the husks of swine.

2. There is no sanctity, if thou, O Lord, withdrawest thy hand.

No

No wisdom availeth, if thou ceaseſt to govern. No ſtrength helpeth, if thou leaveſt to defend. No chaſtitie ſecure, if thou doeſt not protect it. No cuſtodie of our own profitable, if thy ſacred watchfulneſſe be not preſent. For if thou leaveſt us, we ſink, and periſh: but if thou vouchſafeſt to viſit us, we are raiſed up, and do enjoy life. We are inconstant, but by thee we are ſtrengthened: we wax cold, but by thee we receive heat.

3. O how meanly and baſely ought I to think of my ſelf! how little, yea nothing ought I to eſteem it, if I ſeem to have any good! O Lord, how ought I to ſubmit my ſelf under thy unſearchable Judgements: where I find my ſelf to be nothing elſe, but nothing, and leſſe then nothing. O unmeaſurable weight! O ſea that can never be paſſed over, where I find my ſelf onely and wholly nothing! Where then is the lurking-hole of glory? Where is the confidence
con-

conceived of virtue? All vain glory is swallowed up in the depth of thy judgements, which hang over my head.

4. What is all flesh in thy sight? Shall clay glory against him that frameth it? How can he be lifted up with vain words, whose heart is truly subject to God? All the world cannot move him to any elation of mind, whom truth hath subjected unto it; neither shall he be moved with the tongues of all his praisers that hath settled his whole hope in God. For they also that speak, behold, are nothing: they shall passe away with the sound of the words: but the truth of our Lord remaineth for ever.

CHAP. XV.

What we ought to do, and say in every thing which we desire.

Sonne, say thus in every thing,
 Lord if it be pleasing unto thee,
 let this be done in this sort, Lord
 if

if it be to thy honour, let this be done in thy name, Lord if thou seekest it expedient for me, and allowest it to be profitable, then grant unto me, that I may use this unto thine honour. But if thou knowest it will be hurtfull unto me, and not profitable to the health of my soul, take from me all such desire. For every desire proceedeth not from the holy Ghost, though it seem unto man right and good. It is hard to judge whether a good spirit, or the contrary drive thee to desire this or that: or whether also by thine own spirit thou be moved thereunto. Many are deceived in the end, who at the first seemed to be led by a good spirit.

2. Alwayes therefore, whatsoever occurreth unto thy mind to be desired, let it be desired with the fear of God, and humilitie of heart: and above all thou oughtest to commit it unto me with full resignation of thy self: and thou oughtest to say, Lord thou knowest what is best,
do

do this or that, as thou pleasest. Give what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Do with me as thou knowest, and as best pleaseth thee, and is most for thy honour. Set me where thou wilt, and deal with me in all things according to thy will. I am in thy hand; turn me, and turn me again which way soever thou please. Behold I am thy servant, ready to obey thee in all things: for I desire not to live unto my self, but unto thee: and would to God it might be in some worthie and perfect manner.

A prayer for the fulfilling of the will of God.

3. Grant me thy grace sweet Jesus, that it may be with me, and labour with me, and persevere with me untill the end. Grant me alwayes to desire and will that which is most acceptable unto thee, and best pleateth thee. Let thy will be mine,

mine, and let my will ever follow
thine; and agree perfectly with it.
Let my will and nill be all one
with thine: and not to be able to
will, or refuse any thing else, but
what thou wilt, or rejectest.

4. Grant that I may die to all
things that are in the world, and
to love to be condemned for thy
sake, and not to be known in this
world. Grant that above all things
that can be desired, I may rest in
thee, and make my heart to enjoy
peace in thee. Thou art the true
peace of the heart, thou art the
onely rest: out of thee all things
are troublesome and unquiet. In
this peace, in the self same, that is,
in thee, one chiefest eternall Good,
I will sleep and rest. Amen.

CHAP. XVI.

*That true comfort is to be sought in
God alone.*

WHatsoever I can desire or ima-
gine for my comfort, I look not
for

for it in this life, but hereafter. For if I should alone have all the comforts of the world, and might enjoy all the delight thereof, it is certain that they could not long endure. Wherefore my soul, thou canst not be fully comforted nor have perfect delight but in God, the comforter of the poore, and the receiver of the humble. Expect a while, my soul, expect the divine promise, and thou shalt have abundance of all good things in heaven. If thou desire inordinately the things that are present, thou shalt lose the celestiall and eternall. Have temporall things in use, and the eternall in desire. Thou canst not be filled with any temporall goods, because thou art not created to enjoy them.

2. Although thou enjoyest all that is created, yet canst thou not be happy thereby nor blessed: but in God that hath created all things, thy whole beatitude and happinesse consisteth; not such as
is

is seen, and commended by the foolish lovers of the world, but such as the good and faithfull servants of Christ expect, and the spirituall and clean of heart, whose conversation is in heaven, sometimes take a taste of. Vain and short is all humane comfort. Blessed and true is the comfort which is received inwardly from truth. A devout man every where carrieth with him Jesus his comforter, and saith unto him, Be present with me Lord Jesus in every place, and time. Let this be my comfort to be alwayes willing to want all humane comfort. And if thy comfort be wanting, let thy will and just proof be unto me as the greatest comfort: for thou wilt not be angry alwayes, neither wilt thou threaten for ever.

CHAP. XVII.

*That all our care is to be placed
in God,*

Sonne, suffer me to do with thee what I please. I know what is expedient for thee. Thou thinkest as man; thou judgest in many things as humane affection perswadeth thee. Lord, what thou sayest is true. Thy solicitude for me is greater then all the care that I can take for my self. For he standeth at too great a hazard, that casteth not his whole care upon thee. Lord, so that my will may remain right and firm in thee, do with me whatsoever it shall please thee. For it cannot be but good whatsoever thou doest with me.

2. If it be thy will I should be in darknesse, be thou blessed: and if it be thy will I should be in light, be thou again blessed. If thou vouchsafest to comfort me, be thou blessed: and if thou wilt af-
flict

flit me, be thou also ever blessed.
 Sonne, so thou oughtest to be as
 ready to suffer, as to receive joy.
 Thou oughtest to be as willing to
 be poore and needy, as plentifull
 and rich.

3. Lord, I will willingly suffer
 for thee, whatsoever thy pleasure is
 shall befall me. I will receive in-
 differently from thy hand good and
 evil, sweet and sowre, delightfull
 and sorrowfull; and give thee
 thanks for all that happeneth unto
 me. Keep me from all sinne, and I
 will neither fear death nor hell: so
 as thou dost not for ever cast me
 from thee, and blot me out of the
 book of life, what tribulation so-
 ever befall me shall not hurt me.

CHAP. XVIII.

*That temporall miseries, by the
 example of Christ, must be
 born patiently.*

Sonne, I descended from Heaven
 for thy health: I took upon me

thy miseries, my charity and not any necessity drawing me thereunto, that thou mightest learn patience, and not refuse to bear temporall miseries. For from the houre of my birth, until my death on the crosse, I was not without suffering of grief. I suffered great want of temporall things: I often heard many complaints against me: I bare patiently shame and reproches: for benefits I received ingratitude for miracles blasphemies; for heavenly doctrine reprehensions.

2. Lord, for that thou wert patient in thy life-time, chiefly in fulfilling the commandment of thy Father, it is reason that I miserable sinner should have patience in all things according to thy will, and for mine own health bear the burden of this corruptible life as long as thou wilt. For although this present life be burdensome, yet notwithstanding it is now by thy grace made very easie, and by thy example and the footsteps of thy Saints,

more

more plain and tolerable to the weak. Yea, much more comfortable also then it was in times past in the old Law, when the gate of heaven remained shut, and the way also to heaven seemed darker, when so few took care to seek after thy Kingdome. Neither they also that then were just, and were ordained to be saved, could enter into the heavenly glory, but by thy meritorious death and glorious Passion on the Crosse, which was not yet exhibited.

3. O how many and great thanks am I bound to render unto thee, that thou hast vouchsafed to shew unto me and to all faithfull souls a direct and most sure way to thy everlasting Kingdome! For thy life is our way, and by holy patience we go unto thee that art our crown. If thou hadst not gone before us and taught us, who would have taken care to follow thee? Alas! how many would stay behind and remain farre off, if they beheld not

thy excellent examples ! Behold we are yet cold although we have heard of so many of thy wonders, and thy heavenly documents ! what would become of us if we had not so great light to follow thee ?

CHAP. XIX.

Of suffering of injuries: and who is proved to be truly patient.

WHat is it thou sayest, Sonne ? Cease to complain, considering my passion, and that of my other Saints. Thou hast not yet made resistance to the shedding of bloud. It is but little thou sufferest, in comparison of them that have suffered so much, so strongly tempted, so gievously afflicted, so many wayes tried and exercised. Thou oughtest therefore to call to mind the heavy sufferings of others, that thou mayest the easier bear the little adversities which thou sufferest. And if they seem not little, beware lest thy impatience be cause thereof. Yet whether they be little or great, endea-

endeavour to bear all patiently.

2. How much the better thou disposest thy self to suffering, so much the more wisely thou doest, and so much the more favour doest thou procure: thou shalt more easily also endure it, if thy mind be prepared, and thy self accustomed thereunto.

Do not say, I cannot suffer these things of such an one, at the hands of such a person; nor, such things are not to be suffered by me, for he hath done me great wrong, and upbraided me with those things which I never thought of: but of another. I will willingly suffer, and as I shall see cause. Such a thought is foolish; it considereth not the virtue of patience, nor by whom it shall be crowned, but rather weigheth the persons, and the injuries offered.

3. He is not truly patient, that will not suffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whom he listeth. But he that is indeed patient, mindeth not by whom he is exercised; whether by his Superiours, or

some of his equals , or by his inferiours: whether by a good and holy man , or by a perverse and unworthy person. But indifferently from all creatures, how much soever, or how often soever any adversitie happeneth unto him , he taketh all thankfully as from the hands of God, and esteemeth it a great gain for that nothing before God , how little soever , so it be suffered for God , can be without reward.

4. Be thou therefore alwayes prepared for the fight, if thou wilt have thy victory. Without combat thou canst not attain unto the crown of patience. If thou wilt not suffer, thou refusest to be crowned. But if thou desirest to be crowned, fight manfully , and encure patiently: without labour there is no coming to rest , nor without fight can the victory be obtained. Lord let that be made possible to me by thy grace, which seemeth impossible to me by nature. Thou knowest that I can suffer little , and that I am quickly

quickly dismayed, when a small adversity ariseth. Let all exercise of tribulation be made pleasing unto me, and be welcome for thy name: for to suffer and to be troubled for thee, is very profitable for my soul.

CHAP. XX.

Of the acknowledging of our own infirmities: and of the miseries of this life.

I Will confesse against me my injustice: I will confesse unto thee, O Lord, my infirmities. Often times it is a small matter that discomforteth, and grieveth me. I purpose to resist with courage, but when a small temptation cometh, it bringeth me into very narrow straits. It is sometimes a very wile, from whence great temptations do proceed. And whilest I think my self somewhat safe, when I least expect it, I find my self sometimes overcome with a small blast.

2. Behold therefore , Lord , my weaknesse and frailty every way known unto thee. Have mercy on me and deliver me out of the mire of my infirmities , that I stick not fast therein : Let me not for ever remain dejected. This is that which oftentimes beareth me back , and confounds me in thy sight, for that I am so subject to fall , and weak in resisting of my passion. And although I do not altogether consent, yet their continuall assaults are troublesome and grievous unto me ; and it is tedious and a very irksome thing to live thus daily in strife. Hereby my infirmity is made known unto me , for that wicked fancies do alwayes much more easily enter in upon me , then they can be cast out again.

3. O mighty God of Israel , the zealous lover of faithfull souls , let it please thee to consider the labour and sorrow of thy servant, and assist him in all whatsoever he undertaketh. Strengthen me with heavenly

venly force, lest my old man, my miserable flesh, not fully as yet subject to the spirit, prevail and get the upper hand, against which I ought to fight as long as I breathe in this miserable life. Alas, what a kind of life is this, where tribulation and miseries are never wanting! where all is set with snares, and compassed with enemies! For when one tribulation or temptation goeth away, another cometh, yea and during the first conflict also, many others come unlooked for one after another.

4. And how can a life be loved that hath so many afflictions, and is subject to so many calamities and miseries? How is it called a life that begetteth so many deaths and plagues? And yet it is loved, and many seek to delight themselves therein. The world is oftentimes blamed that it is deceitfull and vain, and yet it is not easily forsaken, because the inclinations of our flesh do too much over-rule
us.

us. Some things draw us to love it, others to contemne it. To the love of the world, the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life do draw us; but the pains and miseries that do justly follow them, cause a hatred and lothfomeneſſe thereof.

5. But alas! wicked pleasure overcometh the mind which is given over to the world; and she esteemeth it a delight to be under thorns, because she hath neither seen nor tasted the sweetneſſe of God, and the inward delight of virtue. But they that perfectly contemne the world, and endeavour to live to God under holy discipline, these are not ignorant of the divine sweetneſſe promised to the true forsakers of the world, and do more clearly see how grievously the world erreth, and how it is many wayes deceived.

CHAP.

CH A P. XXI.

*That we are to rest in God above
all his gifts.*

Above all things, and in all
things, my soul, thou shalt e-
ver rest in God, for he is the ever-
lasting rest of the Saints. Grant
me, most sweet and loving Jesu, to
rest in thee above all creatures, a-
bove all health and beauty, above all
glory and honour, above all power
and dignity, above all knowledge
and learning, above all riches and
arts, above all joy and gladness,
above all fame and praise, above all
sweetness and comfort, above all
hope and promise, above all desire
and desire, above all gifts and pre-
sents that thou canst give and im-
part unto us, above all mirth and
jubilee that the mind of man can
receive and feel : lastly, above
Angels and Archangels and above
all the heavenly host, above all vi-
sible and invisible things, and a-
bove

bove all that thou art not, my God.

2. For that thou, my Lord God, surpassest all; thou alone most high, thou alone most powerfull, thou alone most full and sufficient, thou alone most sweet and comfortable, thou alone most beautifull and loving, thou alone most noble and glorious above all things, in whom all good things together both perfectly are, and ever have been, and shall be: and therefore it is too little and not sufficient, whatsoever thou bestowest on me besides thy self; or revealest unto me of thy self, or promistest whilest thou art not seen, and not fully obtained: for surely my heart cannot rest nor be fully contented unless it rest in thee, and surmount all gifts and creatures whatsoever.

3. O my most beloved Spouse Christ Jesus, the most chaste lover, the governour of all creatures, who will give me wings of true liberty to flie and rest in thee? O when shall it be fully granted me to consider

sider in quietnesse of mind, and see how sweet thou art my Lord God! When shall I fully recollect my self in thee, that for thy love I may not feel my self, but thee alone, above all sense and feeling, in a manner not known unto all. But now I oftentimes lament and bear my infelicity with grief. For that many evils abound in this vale of miseries, which do often trouble, grieve, and overwhelm me; often hinder and distract me, allure and intangle me, to the end I should not have free access unto thee, and that I should not enjoy thy sweet and heavenly embracings, which thou alwayes givest to the blessed and celestiall spirits. Let my sighs and manifold desolations on earth move thee.

4. O Jesus, brightnesse of eternall glory, and comfort of the pilgrime-soul, with thee is my tongue without voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee. How long doth my Lord delay to come? Let him come
unto

unto me his poore servant and make me glad. Let him put out hand to deliver me miserable wretch from all anguish. Come, come blessed Lord; for without thee I shall have no joyfull day nor houre. Thou art my joy, and without thee there is nothing but want. A wretched creature I am, and in a manner imprisoned, and loaden with irons, untill thou comfortest me with the light of thy presence, and givest me libertie, and shewest a favourable countenance unto me.

5. Let others seek what they please in stead of thee: but for me, nothing else doth, nor shall delight me, but thou only my God, my hope, my everlasting health. I will not hold my peace, nor cease to pray, untill thy grace return again, and thou speak inwardly unto me. Behold I am here: behold I come unto thee, because thou hast called upon me. Thy tears, and the desire of thy soul, thy humilitie, and the contrition of thy heart, have inclined

clined and brought me unto thee. And I said, Lord I have called thee, and have desired to enjoy thee, being readie to forsake all things for thee. For thou first hast stirred me up that I might seek thee. Blessed be thou therefore, O Lord, that hast shewed this goodnesse to thy servant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

6. What hath thy servant more to say before thee, but that he do greatly humble himself in thy sight, alwayes mindfull of his own iniquity, and basenesse? For there is none like unto thee in all whatsoever is wonderfull in heaven and earth. Thy words are good, thy judgements true, and by thy providence all things are governed, Praise therefore and glory be unto thee, O wisdom of the eternall Father: let my tongue, my soul, and all creatures together praise and blesse thee.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God.

O Pen, O Lord, my heart in thy Law, and teach me to walk in thy Commandments. Grant me to understand thy will, and to remember thy benefits, as well in generall, as in particular, with great reverence and diligent consideration: that hence forward I may be able worthily to give thee thanks. But I know, and confesse, that I am not able to give thee due thanks, for the favours which thou bestowest upon me, even in the least moment. I am lesse then the least of all thy mercies: and when I consider the excellencie of thy Majestie, the greatnesse thereof maketh my spirit to faint.

2. All that we have in our soul and body, and whatsoever we possesse outwardly or inwardly naturally or spiritually, are thy benefits, and do praise thee, as bountifull,
pious,

pious, and good, from whom we have received all that is good. Although one have received more, another lesse, all notwithstanding are thine, and without thee even the least cannot be had. He that hath received greater, cannot glory of his own desert, nor extoll himself above others, nor insult over the lesser: for he is greater and better that ascribeth least unto himself, and is more humble and devout in rendering thanks. And he that esteemeth himself basest of all men, and judgeth himself most unworthy, is fittest to receive greater blessings.

3. And he that hath received fewer, ought not to be sorry nor bear it impatiently, nor envie them that are enriched with greater store, but attend rather unto thee, and chiefly praise thy goodnesse, for that thou bestowest thy gifts so bountifully, so freely, and so willingly without respect of persons. All things proceed from thee, and therefore in all things thou art to be praised.

praised. Thou knowest what is fit to be given to every one; and why this man hath lesse, and he more, it is not ours, but thine to determine who dost weigh in just measure the actions of every one.

4. Wherefore, my Lord God, I esteem it as a great mercie, not to have much, whereby outwardly and before men I might seem worthy of praise and glory: so that he, who considereth his own povertie, and basenesse, ought not therefore to conceive grief or sorrow, or to be therefore troubled, but rather to take great comfort, and to be glad: for that thou, O God, hast chosen the poore and humble, and the despised of this world for thy self, and for thy familiar and domesticall friends. Witnesses are thy Apostles themselves, whom thou hast appointed Princes over all the earth. And yet they lived without complaint in the world, so humble and simple, so mean to the eyes of men without all malice and deceit, that
they

they rejoyced to receive reproch for thy name, and what the world abhorreth, they embraced with great affection.

5. Nothing therefore ought so to rejoyce him that loveth thee, and acknowledgeth thy benefits: as the accomplishment of thy will in himself, and the pleasure of thy eternal appointment; wherewith he ought to be so contented and comforted; that he would as willingly be the least as any would wish to be the greatest: and as peaceable and content in the last as in the first place: and as willing to be despised and contemned, and to be of no esteem or account, as to be preferred in honour before all others, and to be greater in the world. For thy will and the love of thy glory ought to be preferred before all things, and to comfort him more, and please him better, then all the benefits which he hath received, or can desire.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

*Of foure things that bring much
peace.*

Sonne, now I will teach thee the way of peace, and true libertie. Do Lord, I beseech thee, as thou saist, for I shall be very glad to heare it. Endeavour my Sonne to do rather the will of another, then thine own. Ever choose rather to have lesse then more. Alwayes seek the lowest place, and to be inferiour to every one. With alwayes, and pray, that the will of God may be wholly fulfilled in thee. Behold such a man entereth into the limits of peace, and most quiet rest.

2. Lord, this thy short speech containeth much perfection. It is little in words, but full in sense, and abundant in fruit. For if it could exactly be kept by me, then should I not so easily be troubled. For as often as I feel my self unquiet and afflicted, I find that I have strayed from this doctrine. But thou that
canst

canst do all things, and ever lovest
the good and profit of my soul, in-
crease in me thy grace, that I may
fulfill thy words, and perfect mine
own health.

A prayer against evil thoughts.

3. My Lord God, be not farre
from me; my God have regard to
help me: For sundrie thoughts
have risen up against me, and great
fears, afflicting my soul. How shall
I passe through them without hurt?
How shall I break through them
without danger? I, saith he, will go
before thee, and will humble the
great ones of the earth. I will open
the doores of the prison, and reveal
unto thee hidden secrets. Do Lord
as thou sayest, and let all my evil
thoughts flie from before thy face.
This is my hope, my onely com-
fort, to flie unto thee in all tribula-
tion, to trust in thee, to call upon
thee from my heart, and to expect
patiently thy comfort.

*A prayer for enlightning of the
mind.*

4. Enlighten me good Iesu, with the cleareneſſe of inward light, and expell all darkneſſe from my heart. Repreſſe the many wandering thoughts, and bear down the fury of the temptations which violently aſſault me. Fight ſtrongly for me, and vanquiſh the evil beaſt, that is, the alluring concupiſcences, that peace may be made by thy virtue, and abundance of thy praiſe ſound in thy holy Court, which is a pure conſcience. Command the winds and tempeſts: ſay unto the ſea, Be ſtill: and to the north wind: Blow not; and a great calm ſhall enſue.

5. Send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may ſhine upon the earth: for I am empirie and unprofitable earth, untill thou imparteſt thy light unto me. Poure out thy grace from above, waſh my heart with heavenly dew, give waters of devotion, to waſh the face of the
earth,

earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit. Lift up my mind overcharged with the weight of Sinne: draw up my whole desire to heavenly treasures, that having tasted the sweetnesse of celestiall happinesse, it may loath to think of earthly vanities.

6. Take me violently to thee, and deliver me from all unstable comfort of creatures: for no created thing can fully quiet and satisfie my desire. Joyn me unto thee with an unspeakable band of love: for thou onely fillest the mind of him that loveth thee, and without thee all things are vain.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of flying curious inquiry of the life of others.

Sonne, be not curious: trouble not thy self with idle cares. What is this or that to thee? do thou follow me. For what is it to thee, whether that man be such or no, or

K

whether;

whether this man do, or speak this or that? Thou shalt not need to answer for others, but shalt give account of thy self. Why therefore dost thou trouble thy self? Behold I know every one what he is, and do see all things that are under the sunne: and do understand how it is with every one; what he thinketh, what he would, and at what his intention aimeth. All things therefore are to be committed unto me: but do thou keep thy self in good peace. and suffer the unquiet to do as they will. Whatsoever they shall have done, or said, shall fall upon themselves, for they cannot deceive me.

2. Desire not too great fame in this world, nor to be known to many, nor to have the private love of men: for these things breed distractions, and cause great darknesse of heart. I would willingly utter my words, and reveal my secrets unto thee, if thou didst diligently observe my coming, and didst open
the

the doore of thy heart unto me. Be carefull and watch in prayer, and humble thy self in all things.

CHAP. XXV.

*Wherein the firm peace of the heart,
and true profit consisteth.*

Sonne, I have said, Peace I leave to you, my peace I give to you: not as the world giveth, do I give to you. All do desire peace, but all care not for those things that appertain unto true peace. My peace is with the humble, and meek of heart. Thy peace shall be in much patience. If thou wilt heare me and follow my voice thou maist enjoy much peace. What then shall I do Lord? In every thing attend unto thy self what thou doest, and what thou sayest: and direct thy whole intention unto this, that thou maist please me alone and desire or seek nothing out of me. Of the sayings and doings of others, judge nothing rashly: neither do thou in-

K 2 tangle

tangle thy self with things not committed unto thee: and doing thus, it may be thou shalt be little or seldome troubled.

2. But never to feel any trouble at all, nor to suffer any grief of heart or body, is not the state of this life, but of everlasting rest. Think not therefore that thou hast found true peace, if thou feelest no sorrow, nor that then all is well, if thou have no adversary, nor that it is perfect, if all things be done according to thy desire. Neither do thou then esteem highly of thy self, or imagine thy self to be specially beloved, if thou be in great devotion, and sweetnesse: for in these things a true lover of virtue is not tried; neither doth the profit and perfection of man consist in having them.

3. Wherein then Lord? In offering thy self from the very bottom of thy heart unto the will of God, nor seeking thine own interest, or commoditie, neither in great

nor little, neither for a time nor for ever, so that with equall countenance, thou mayest persist in thanksgiving, both in prosperitie and in adversitie, weighing all things with an equall ballance. If thou be of such courage and so patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawn from thee, prepare thou thy heart to suffer greater matters, and not justifie thy self, as though thou oughtest not to suffer these, and so great afflictions, but justifie me in whatsoever I appoint, and praise my holy name; then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace: and thou shalt have undoubted hope to see my face again with great joy. And if thou attain to the full contempt of thy self; then shalt thou enjoy as great abundance of peace, as thy banishment may permit.

CHAP. XXVI.

*Of the excellency of a free mind,
which humble prayer better
deserveth then reading.*

LOrd, it is the work of a perfect man, never to slack his mind from the attentive thought of heavenly things, and as it were to passe without care through many cares: not faintingly, but with a certain priviledge of a free mind, adhering by inordinate affection to no creature.

2. I beseech thee most mercifull God, preserve me from the cares of this life, lest I should be too much intangled thereby: and from the many necessities of the body, lest I should be enthralled by pleasure: from all hindrances of the soul, lest broken with troubles I should be dejected and dismayed. I mean not from those things that worldly vanitie so greatly desireth: but from those miseries, that as punishments, do weigh down and hinder the soul
of

of thy servant, with the generall curse of mortality, that it cannot enter into libertie of spirit, as often as it would.

3. O my God, the unspeakable sweetnesse, make bitter unto me all carnall comfort, which may draw me away from the love of everlasting happinesse, and wickedly allure me to it self with the force of certain present delight. Let not flesh and bloud overcome me, O Lord. Let not the world and the short glory thereof deceive me. Let not the Devil and his subtile fraud supplant me. Give me force to resist, patience to suffer, and constancie to persevere. Give me in stead of all the comforts of the world the most sweet unction of thy spirit, and in lieu of carnall love, poure into my soul the love of thy name.

4. Behold, meat, drink, clothes, and other necessities for the maintenance of the body, are burdensome unto a fervent spirit. Grant me to affect such nourishments in

due measure, and not to be intangled with an over great desire of them. It is not lawfull to renounce them wholly, for that nature is to be sustained: but to desire superfluities, and those things that do rather delight than sustain the law of God forbiddeth: for otherwise the flesh would rebell against the spirit. Herein I beseech thee let thy hand govern me, and teach me, that I may not exceed.

CHAP. XXVII.

*That private love most hindereth
from the chiefest Good.*

SOME, thou oughtest to give all for Christ, and to retain nothing of thy self. Know that the love of thy self doth hurt thee more than any thing in the world. According to the love, and affection thou bearest them, so doth every thing cleave unto thee more or lesse. If thy love be pure, simple, and well ordered, thou shalt be free from bondage.

bondage. Cover not that which thou mayest not have. Be not willing to have that which may binder thee and deprive thee of inward liberty. It is a wonderfull thing that thou committest not thy self wholly unto me, from the bottom of thy heart with all things that thou canst desire, or have.

2. Why dost thou consume thy self with vain grief? Why tirest thou thy mind with needlesse cares? Resigne thy self to me, and thou shalt feel no losse at all. If thou seekest this or that, and wouldest be here or there, to enjoy thine own commoditie and pleasure; thou shalt never be in quiet, nor free from trouble of mind: for in every thing, somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will crosse thee.

3. Not every externall thing therefore attained, and heaped together helpeth thee; but it rather availerh if thou despise it, and dost root it out from thy heart; which

thou must not understand onely of thy revenues and wealth, but of the desire of honour also, and vain praise; all which do passe away with this fading world. The place availeth little, if the spirit of fervour be wanting: neither shall that peace which is sought abroad long continue, if the state of thy heart be destitute of a true foundation: that is, unlesse thou persist in me, thou maist change, but not better thy self. For when occasion doth happen, thou shalt find that which thou soughtest to flie, and perhaps more.

A prayer for cleansing the heart, and obtaining of heavenly wisdom.

4 Confirm me O Lord with the grace of thy holy spirit. Give me force to strengthen my inward man, and to purge my heart from all unprofitable care, and grief; not to be drawn away with sundrie desires of any thing either little or great, but

to consider all things, how they are transitorie, and do quickly fail, and that my self do also passe away together with them: for nothing is permanent under the sunne, where all things are vanitie, and affliction of mind. O how wise is he that so considereth them!

5. Grant me, Lord, heavenly wisdom, that I may learn above all things to seek and find thee, above all things to delight in thee, and to love thee, and to think of all created things as they are according to the disposition of thy wisdom. Grant me prudently to avoid him that flattereth me, and to suffer patiently him that contradicteth me. It is great wisdom not to be moved with every blast of words: not to give eare to dangerous flatterie: for so we shall go on securely in the way which we have begun.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Against the tongue of Slanderers.

Sonne, be not grieved if some think evil of thee, and speak that which thou dost not willingly heare. Thou oughtest to judge the worst of thy self and to think no man weaker then thy self. If thou walk spiritually thou wilt not much esteem of flying words. It is not small wisdom to be silent in time of evil, and inwardly to turn to me, and not to be troubled with the judgement of men.

2. Let not thy peace be in the tongues of men. For whether they judge well or evil, thou art nevertheless alwayes the same. Where is true peace, and true glorie? Is it not in me? And he that coveteth not to please men, nor feareth to displease them, shall enjoy much peace. From inordinate love and vain fear ariseth all disquiet of heart and distraction of the senses.

CHAP.

C H A P. X X I X.

*How we ought to call upon God, and
bless him when tribulation
draweth near.*

Blessed (O Lord) be thy name
for ever; since it pleaseth thee
that this temptation and tribula-
tion should fall upon me. I cannot
flee it, but have need to flee to thee,
that thou maist help me, and turn
it to my good. Lord I am now af-
flicted, and it is not well with me,
I am much troubled with this pre-
sent grief. And now, dear Father,
what shall I say? I am taken in
narrow straits, save me in this
houre. Yea therefore came I into
this houre, that thou maist be glo-
rified, when I shall be greatly
humbled, and by thee delivered.
Let it please thee Lord to deliver
me: for, poore wretch that I am,
what can I do, and whither shall I
go without thee? Grant patience
Lord, even this time also. Help me
my

my God, and then I will not fear how much soever I be oppressed.

2. And now in this, what shall I say? Lord, thy will be done, I have well deserved to be afflicted and grieved. Surely I ought to bear it: and I would to God I might bear it with patience, untill the tempest be passed over, and it become calm. But thy omnipotent hand is able to take this temptation from me, and to assuage the violence thereof, that I utterly sink not under it, as oftentimes heretofore thou hast done unto me, my God, my Mercie. And how much the more hard it is to me, so much the more easie is this change of thy mighty hand to thee.

CHAP. XXX.

Of craving the divine aid, and confidence of recovering grace.

Sonne, I am thy Lord, who do use to give comfort in the day of tribulation. Come unto me when
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it is not well with thee. This is that which most of all hindreth heavenly consolation, that thou art slow in turning thy self unto prayer. For before thou dost earnestly commend thy self to me, thou seekest many comforts, and delightest thy self in outward things. And hence it proceedeth that all doth little profit thee, untill thou consider that I am he, that deliver those that trust in me: and that out of me there is neither powerfull help, nor profitable counsell, nor remedie that can continue. But now thou having recovered breath after the tempest, gather strength again in the light of my mercies: for I am at hand, saith our Lord, to repair all, not onely entirely, but also abundantly, and in a very plentiful measure.

2. Is there any thing hard to me? Or am I like unto him that promiseth and performeth not? Where is thy faith? Be firm and constant. Take courage and be patient; comfort
fort

fort will be given thee in due time. Attend me, expect, I will come and cure thee. It is a temptation that vexeth thee: and a vain fear that affrighteth thee. What else doth the care for future incertainties bring thee, but sorrow upon sorrow? Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. It is a vain and unprofitable thing to be grieved, or to rejoyce for future things, that perhaps will never happen.

3. But it is incident to man, to be deluded with such imaginations: and a signe of little courage to be so easily drawn away by the suggestion of the enemy. For he careth not so he delude and deceive thee, whether it be true or false which he proposeth: whether he overthrow thee with the love of present, or the fear of future things. Let not therefore thy heart be troubled, neither do thou fear. Believe in me and put thy trust in my mercie. When thou thinkest thy self furthest off from me, oftentimes

times I am nearest unto thee. When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then oftentimes greatest gain of merit is at hand. All is not lost when any thing falleth out contrary unto thee. Thou must not judge according to that which thou seekest for the present: nor give thy self over to any grief from whence soever it cometh, as though all hope of delivery were quite gone.

4. Think not thy self wholly left although for a time I have sent thee some tribulation, or withdrawn thy desired comfort: for this is the way to the kingdome of heaven. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee, and the rest of my servants, that ye be exercised with many adversities, then that ye should have all things according to your desires. I know the secret thoughts of thy heart, and that it is very expedient for thy soules health, that thou be left sometimes without taste and feeling of spirituall

tuall sweetnesse , lest perhaps thou shouldest be puffed up with good successe and shouldest please thy self in that which thou art not. That which I have given , I can take away , and restore it again when I please.

5. When I give it , it is mine : when I withdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine; for mine is every good and every perfect gift. If I send thee affliction , or any Crosse whatsoever , repine not, nor be not dismayed : I can quickly lift thee up again , and turn all thy sorrow into joy. Neverthelesse I am just, and greatly to be praised , when I do all this unto thee.

6. If thou be wise , and consider well thy case , thou wilt never yield so cowardly to grief , for any adversitie that befallerh thee , but rather rejoyce and give thanks : yea, to account this thy onely joy , that afflicting thee with sorrows , I do not spare thee. As my Father hath loved me , I also love you, said I
unto

unto my beloved Disciples ; whom certainly I sent not to temporall joyes , but to great conflicts : not to honours , but to contempts ; not to idlenesse , but to labours : not to rest , but to bring much fruit in patience. My Sonne remember these words.

C H A P . X X X I .

*Of the contempt of all creatures , to
find our Creatour.*

LOrd , I stand yet in need of great grace, if I must go so farre as that no man or creature can hinder me. For as long as any thing holdeth me , I cannot flie freely unto thee. He desired to flie with great libertie that said , Who will give me wings like a dove , and I will flie and rest? What thing more quiet then a single eye ? And what more free , then he that desireth nothing upon earth ? Man ought therefore to ascend above all creatures, and perfectly to forsake himself , and to remain in excessit of miud,

mind, and consider that thou, who art the Maker of all things, hast nothing amongst creatures like unto thee. And unlesse a man be free from the affection of all creatures, he cannot with freedome of mind attend unto divine things. And for this cause there are so few contemplative men to be found, for that few can wholly sequester themselves from fading creatures.

2. Much grace is necessarie to lift up a soul, and to carry it above it self. And unlesse a man be lifted up in spirit, and delivered from all creatures, and wholly united unto God, whatsoever he knoweth, and whatsoever he hath, is of little account. Long shall he be little, and lie in earthly basenesse, that esteemeth any thing great; but the one onely unmeasurable and eternall Good. For whatsoever is not God is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing. There is great difference between the wisdom of a spirituall and devout person, and
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the knowledge of a learned and studious Clerk. Farre more noble is that learning which floweth from above from the divine influence, then that which is painfully gotten by the wit of man.

3. There are many that desire contemplation, but they endeavour not to exercise those things that are required thereunto. It is a great hinderance that we rest in signes and sensible things, and have little true mortification. I know not what it is, nor by what spirit we are led, nor what we pretend. We that seem to be called spirituall, that we take so much pains, and so great care for transitory and base things; and scarce or seldome think of our own inward profit, with full recollection of our senses.

4. Alas, presently after a slight recollection, we break forth, and weigh not our words with diligent examination. We mind not where our affections lie: nor bewail the impurity and many faults that are

in all our actions. For all flesh had corrupted her way, and therefore did that generall floud ensue. Sith our inward affection then is much corrupted, it must needs be that our actions proceeding thereof be corrupted, as a signe of the want of inward vigour. From a pure heart proceedeth the fruit of a good life.

5. We ask how much one hath done: but how virtuous his actions are, is not so diligently considered. We inquire whether he be strong, rich, beautifull, handsome, a good writer, a good singer, or a good labourer: but how poore he is in spirit, how patient and meek, how devout and spirituall, is seldome spoken of. Nature respecteth outward things, grace turneth her self to the inward virtues. That is often deceived: this hath her trust in God, to the end she be not deceived.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of deniall of our selves, and forsaking all our affections.

Sonne, thou canst not possesse perfect libertie, unless thou wholly denie thy self. All such as be lovers of themselves are bound in fetters, they are covetous, curious, wanderers, seekers of ease, and not of those things that appertain to Jesus Christ; but oftentimes devising and framing that which will not continue. For all shall perish that proceedeth not from God. Keep this short and compleat word: Forsake all, and thou shalt find all. Leave thy inordinate desires, and thou shalt find rest. Consider this well: and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt understand all.

2. Lord, this is not one dayes work, nor children sport: yea, in this short sentence all the perfection of religious persons is included.

Sonne,

Sonne, thou must not go back, nor straitwayes be dejected, when thou hearest the way of the perfect; but rather be stirred up to more worthy and noble attempts, or at least to conceive an earnest desire thereof. I would it were so well with thee, and thou wert come so far, that thou wert no longer a lover of thy self, but didst stand merely at my beck, and at his whom I have appointed a Father over thee: then thou shouldst exceedingly please me, and all thy life would passe away in joy and peace. Thou hast yet many things to forsake which unlesse thou wholly resigne over unto me, thou shalt not attain to that which thou desirest. I counsel thee to buy of me purified gold, that thou mayst become rich, that is, heavenly wisdom, which treadeth under foot all base and earthly things. Set little by the wisdom of this world, and esteem not of the contentment of men, nor thine own fantasies.

3. I said, that thou shouldst buy the mean and base things, with the precious, and those that were with men of great esteem. For true heavenly wisdom seemeth very base, and of small account, and is scarce thought of by men: for that esteemeth not highly of it self, nor seeketh to be magnified upon earth: which many praise from the teeth outward, but in their life they are farre from it: yet is it the precious pearl which is hidden from many.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Of inconstancy of heart, and of directing our finall intentions unto God.

Sonne, trust not to thy affection: that which now is, will quickly change into another. As long as thou livest thou art subject to mutability, even against thy will: so that now thou art merry, now sad; now quiet, now troubled; now devout, now distracted; now dili-

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gent, now idle ; now heavy , now light. But he that is wise and well instructed in spirit, remaineth alwayes one in the midst of these changes , not heeding what he seeketh in himself , or which way the wind of mutability bloweth ; but that the whole intention of his mind may tend, as it ought, to the most perfect and best end. For so he may continue one, and the self same, without any change in the midst of so many sundry chances, directing alwayes the sincere eye of his intention unto me.

2. And how much purer the eye of the intention is , so much the more constantly doth he passe through the variety of many contrary wayes. But in many things the eye of a sincere intention waxeth blind , for it quickly looketh upon some delightfome object that it meeteth withall. And it is rare to find one that is wholly free from all blemish of seeking himself. So the Jews in times past came into Bethania

Bethania to Martha and Mary, not for Jesus alone, but to see Lazarus also. The eye of our intention therefore is to be purged, that it may be sincere and pure, and to be directed unto me, neglecting the multitude and variety of earthly objects.

CHAP. XXXIV.

*That God is sweet above all things,
and in all things, to him
that loveth.*

BEhold my God, and behold all things! What would I have more, and what more happy thing can I desire? O sweet and comfortable word! but to him that loveth the Word, not the world, nor those things that are in the world. My God, and all things! Enough is said to him that understandeth: and it is pleasant to him that loveth to repeat it often. For when thou art present, all things do yield delight; but when thou art absent, all

L 2 become

become iⁿsome. Thou givest quiet of heart and much peace, and pleasant joy. Thou makest men think well of all, and praise thee in all things: neither can any thing please us long without thee: but if it be pleasant and delightfome thy grace must be present, and it must be seasoned with the sweetnesse of thy wisdom.

2. What can be distastfull unto him to whom thou art pleasing? And whom thou delightest not what can be pleasant to him? But the wise of this world, and they that have their contentment in sensuall things, cannot attain to thy wisdom: for in the world is much vanity, and in the flesh is death. But they that follow thee by the contempt of worldly things, and mortification of the flesh, are proved to be truly wise: for they are changed from vanity to truth, from flesh to spirit. To these God is sweet, and what good soever is found in creatures, they wholly referre unto the praise

praise of their Maker. Notwithstanding great, yea very great is the difference between the sweetnesse of the Creatour, and of the creature, of eternity and of time, of uncreated and created light.

3. O everlasting light, surpassing all created lights, cast forth the beams of thy brightnesse from above, and pierce the most inward corners of my heart: purifie, rejoyce, claifie, and quicken my spirit with all the powers thereof, that I may cleave unto thee with excesse of unspeakable joy. O when will that blessed and desired houre come, that I may be filled with thy presence, and thou maist be unto me all in all. As long as this is not granted me, I shall not have full nor perfect joy. Alas! my old man yet liveth in me, he is not wholly crucified, he is not perfectly dead. He doth yet covet strongly against the spirit and moveth evill warres, and suffereth not the Kingdome of my soul to be in peace.

L 3

4. But

4. But thou that rulest the powers of the sea, and asswagest the motion of the waves, rise and help me dissipate the people that desire warre, and destroy them in thy might, and let thy hand be glorified: for there is no hope nor refuge for me, but in thee my Lord God.

CHAP. XXXV.

That there is no security from temptation in this life.

Sonne, there is no security in this life: as long as thou livest thou shalt alwayes have need of spirituall armour. Thou livest among enemies, and art assaulted on all sides. If therefore thou defendest not thy self on every side with the shield of patience, thou canst not be long unwounded. Moreover, if thou fix not thy heart on me with a sincere will to suffer all things for me, thou canst not sustain the heat of this battel, nor get that victorious crown which they have that are in glory.

glory. Thou oughtest therefore manfully to go through all, and to use a strong hand against whatsoever withstanderh thee. For to him that overcometh is given Man- na; and to the negligent is left much wo.

2. If thou seekest rest in this world, how wilt thou attain to everlasting rest? Give not thy self to much ease, but to much patience. Seek true peace, not in earth, but in heaven; not in men, nor in any creature, but in God alone. Thou oughtest for the love of God willingly to undergo whatsoever labours, to endure whatsoever griefs, temptations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, injuries, detractions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts: these help to the attaining of virtue: these try a Novice of Christ: these make up an heavenly crown. I will give an everlasting reward for a short labour, and infinite glory for transitory confusion.

L 4

3. Think-

3. Thinkest thou that thou shalt alwayes have spirituall contolations at will? My Saints had not so; but many afflictions, and sundry temptations, and many discomforts: all which they endured patiently, and trusted rather in God then in themselves, knowing that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to obtain future glory. Wilt thou have that straightwayes, which many after tears and great labours have hardly obtained? Expect the coming of thy Lord, do manfully, be of good courage: fear not, do not fly, but offer both body and soul for the glory of God. I will reward thee in most plentiful manner, and I will be with thee in all thy tribulations.

CHAP. XXXVI.

*Against the vain judgements
of men.*

Sonne, fix thy heart stedfastly on God, and fear not the judgements of

of men, when thy conscience giveth testimony of thy justice and innocency. It is a good and happy thing to suffer in that sort: neither will it be burdensome to an humble mind, nor to him that trusteth rather in God, then in himself. The most part of men are given to talk much, and therefore little care is to be had of their words: neither is it possible to satisfie all. Though the Apostle endeavoured to please all in our Lord, and made himself all unto all, yet he little regarded that he was judged by humane judgement.

2. He did for the edification and health of others as much as he could, and lay in him: yet could he not hinder but that he was sometimes judged and despised by others. Therefore he committed all to God, who knew all, and defended himself with patience and humility against evil tongues, and such as thought vanities and lies, and spake what they listed: Yet

sometimes notwithstanding he answered, lest the weak might have received scandal by his silence.

3. Who art thou that fearest a mortall man? To day he is, and to morrow he is not seen. Fear God and the terrour of men shall not trouble thee. What harm can the words or injuries of any do thee? He rather hurteth himself then thee: neither can he avoid the judgements of God, be he what he will. Have thou God before thine eyes, and contend not with complaining words. And if for the present thou seemest to be troden down, and to suffer shame and confusion without desert, do not repine, neither do thou lessen thy crown by thy impatience; but rather lift up thy eyes to me in heaven. I am able to deliver thee from all shame and wrong, and to repay every one according to their works.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVII.

*Of a full and pure resignation of our
selves for the obtaining free-
dome of heart.*

Sonne, leave thy self, and thou shalt find me. Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to thy self and thou shalt ever gain. For greater grace shall alwayes be given thee, when thou dost perfectly resigne thy self, and not turn back to take thy self again. Lord, how often shall I resigne my self? and wherein shall I forsake my self? Alwayes, and in every thing, as well in little as in great. I do except nothing, but do require that thou be as it were naked and void of all things. Otherwise how canst thou be perfectly mine, and I thine, unless both within and without thou be free from all self-will? And how much the sooner thou dost this, so much the better able shalt thou find thy self, and how much
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the more fully and sincerely thou doest it, so much the more shalt thou please me, and so much the more shalt thou gain.

2. Some there are that resigne themselves, but with some exception, For they put not their whole trust in God, and therefore do labour to provide for themselves. Some also at the first do offer all, but afterwards being assailed with temptations, do return again to that which they had left, and therefore they go not forward in the way of virtue. These shall not attain to the true liberty of a pure heart, nor to the grace of my Divine familiarity, unlessie they first make an entire resignation, and offer themselves a daily sacrifice unto me. For without this the union with me, wherewith my Saints enjoy me, can never be obtained.

3. I have often said unto thee, and now again I say the same, Forsake thy self, resigne thy self, and thou shalt enjoy great internall peace.
Give

Give all for all; seek nothing, require nothing, repose thy self purely and with a full confidence in me, and I will give my self unto thee, and darknesse shall not cover thee. Let this be thy whole endeavour, let this be thy prayer, let this be thy desire, that casting off all propriety, thou mayst onely follow thy naked Saviour Jesus; and dying to thy self, mayst live eternally to me. Then shall vain fantasies, evil perturbations, and all superfluous cares fly away: then shall immoderate fear leave thee, and inordinate love shall die.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Of good government in outward things, and of recourse to God in dangers.

Sonne, thou oughtest with all diligence to procure, that in every place and action or externall businesse, thou be inwardly free and master of thy self, and that all things

things be under thy disposition, and and thou not subject to them ; that thou mayst be lord and master of thy actions, not a servant or a hireling, but rather a free-man and a true Hebrew , belonging to the lot and freedome of the sonnes of God, who put the things that are present under their feet, and place their thoughts on that which is eternall : who look on transitory things with the left eye, and with the right do behold the things of heaven : who suffer not themselves to be drawn to cleave unto them, but rather dispose and use them, as they are ordained by God, and appointed by the Creatour of all, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2. If thou remain firm and stedfast in all events, and dost not weigh by the outward appearance, nor with a carnall eye the things which thou seest and hearest ; but presently in every occasion dost enter with Moses into the Tabernacle

to ask counsel of our Lord, thou shalt sometimes heare the divine and celestiaall Oracle, and shalt return instructed of many things both present and to come. Moses had alwayes recourse to the Tabernacle for the deciding of all doubts and obscure questions, and fled to the help of prayer, for the remedie of the iniquity and dangers of men. So oughtest thou in like manner to fly to the closet of thy heart, earnestly craving the Divine favour. For the Scripture testifieth, that therefore was Joshua and the children of Israel deceived by the Gibeonites, because they consulted not first with God, but giving too lightly credit to fair words, were deluded with counterfeit pietie.

CHAP. XXXIX.

*That a man be not over-earnest in
his affairs.*

Sonne, alwayes commit thy cause
to me, I will dispose well of it in
due

due time: expect my ordination, and thou shalt find it will be for thy good. Lord, I do most willingly commit all unto thee, for my care can profit little. O that I cleaved not too much to future events, but offered my self with all readinesse of mind to thy Divine pleasure.

2. Sonne, oftentimes a man doth earnestly labour for that which he desireth, and when he hath gotten it, he beginneth to be of another mind, and not to esteem so much of it as before he did: for mans affections do not long continue fixed on one thing, but do passe from one to another. It is therefore a matter not of least moment, to forsake our selves even in the least things.

3. The true spirituall profit of man consisteth in denying and forsaking of himself: and he that is thus resigned, liveth in great freedom and security. But the ancient enemy, who alwayes laboureth to withstand the servants of God, omitteth

mitteth at no time his wonted temptations, but day and night lieth still in wait, to cast the unwary, if he can, into the snare of deceit. Watch therefore and pray, saith our Lord, that you enter not into temptation.

CHAP. XL.

*That man hath no good of himself,
nor any thing whereof he
can glory.*

Lord, what is man that thou art
mindfull of him, or the sonne
of man, that thou vouchsafest to
visit him? What hath man deser-
ved that thou shouldest give him
thy grace? Lord, what cause have
I to complain, if thou forsake me?
Or if thou doest not that which I
desire, what can I justly say against
it? Surely, this I may truly think
and say, Lord, I am nothing, I can
do nothing, I have nothing that is
good of my self, but in all things I
do fail, and am defective, and do
ever

ever tend to nothing : and unlesse thou help me, and dost interiously instruct me, I become cold, and am dissolved.

2. But thou, O Lord, art alwayes the same, and endurest for ever; alwayes good, just, and holy, doing all things well, justly, and holily, and disposing all things with wisdom. But I that am more inclined to fall, then to go forward, do never continue in one estate: for seven different times are changed over me, yet doth it soon turn to the better when it so pleaseth thee, and when thou vouchsafest to stretch forth thy helping hand. For thou alone canst help me without the favour of man, and so strengthen me, that my countenance shall be no more changed, but my heart shall be converted, and rest in thee alone.

3. Wherefore if I could once perfectly forsake all humane comfort, either for the love of devotion, or for mine own necessitie, which
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inforceth me to seek after thee (for none else can comfort me) then might I well hope in thy grace, and rejoyce in the gift of new consolation.

4. Thanks be unto thee, from whence all proceedeth, as often as it goeth well with me : but I am mere vanitie, and nothing before thee, an unconstant and weak man. Whereof then can I glory ? Or why do I desire to be esteemed of ? Is it not of nothing ? And this is most vain. Truly vain glory is an evil plague and very great vanitie : because it draweth from true glorie, and robbeth the soul of heavenly grace. For whilst a man pleaseth himself, he displeaseth thee : whilst he gapeth after the praise of men, he is deprived of true virtue.

5. But true glory, and holy exultation, and joy, is for a man to glory in thee, and not in himself; to rejoyce in thy name, and not in his own virtue, nor to delight in any creature but for thee. Praised be
thy

thy name, not mine : magnified be thy work, not mine. Let thy holy name be for ever blessed, but to me let no part of mens praises be given. Thou art my glory , thou art the joy of my heart. In thee will I glory and rejoyce all the day ; but for my self I will not joy, but in my infirmities.

6. Let the Jews seek the glory, which one man giveth to another : I will desire this , which is from God alone. For all humane glory, all temporall honour, all worldly highness, compared to thy eternall glory, is vanity and folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God, most Blessed Trinitie, to thee alone be all praise, honour, virtue, and glory for all eternitie.

CHAP. XLI.

Of the contempt of all temporall honours.

Sonne, trouble not thy self , if thou seest others honoured and advan-

advanced, and thy self contemned and debased. Lift up thy heart unto me in heaven, and the contempt of men in earth will not grieve thee. Lord, we are blind, and quickly seduced with vanitie. If I look well into my self, I cannot say that any creature hath done me wrong; and therefore I cannot justly complain of thee.

2. But because I have often and grievously sinned against thee, all creatures do justly take arms against me: for shame and contempt is due unto me, but unto thee praise, honour, and glory. And unlesse I do so prepare my self, that I be willing, and do rejoyce to be despised and forsaken of all creatures, and to be esteemed nothing at all, I cannot obtain internall strength and peace, nor be spiritually enlightened, nor wholly united unto thee.

CHAP. XLII.

*That our peace is not to be placed
in men.*

Sonne, if the peace thou hast with any be grounded on the opinion which thou hast of him, or on the contentment thou receivest in his company, thou shalt ever be unconstant and subject to disquiet: but if thou have recourse unto the everliving and eternall Truth, a friend going from thee or dying shall not grieve thee. The love of thy friend ought to rest in me; and for me is he to be beloved, whosoever he be, whom thou thinkest well of, and is verily dear unto thee in this life. No friendship can avail, or continue without me; neither is the love true and pure, which they have, whose hearts are not joynd together by me. Thou oughtest to be so dead to such affections of beloved friends, that (for as much as appertaineth unto thee) thou shouldest wish to be without all company

company of men. Man approacheth so much the nearer unto God, by how much the further off he departeth from all earthly comfort: so much the higher also he ascendeth unto God, by how much lower he descendeth into himself, and how much the baser he is in his own conceit.

2. But he that attributeth any good thing unto himself, hindreth the coming of Gods grace into him. For the grace of the holy Ghost ever seeketh an humble heart. If thou couldst perfectly annihilate thy self, and purge thy self of all created love, then should there flow into thee great abundance of my grace. When thou castest thy eyes on creatures, the sight of thy Creatour is taken from thee. Learn to overcome thy self in all things, for the love of thy Creatour; & then shalt thou be able to attain to heavenly knowledge. How little soever it be, if it be inordinately loved and regarded, it defileth

fileth the soul, and hindreth the enjoying of the chiefest good.

CHAP. XLIII.

Against vain and secular knowledge.

Sonne, let not the fair speeches, and subtile sayings of men move thee. For the Kingdome of God consisteth not in words, but in virtue. Observe well the words which I speak: for they infame the heart, and enlighten the mind, induce compunction, and bring sundry comforts. Do thou never reade to shew thy self learned or wise; but labour to mortifie thy vices; for that will profit thee more, then the knowledge of many hard and difficult questions.

2. When thou shalt have read and known many things, thou oughtest ever to return to one beginning. I am he, that teacheth man all knowledge, and to give to little ones a more clear understanding,

ing, then can be taught by man. He therefore, to whom I speak, shall quickly be wise and shall profit much in spirit. Wo be to them, that enquire many curious things of men, and do little desire to know the way how to serve me. The time will come, when the Master of masters shall appear, Christ the Lord of Angels to heare the lessons of all, that is, to examine the consciences of every one: and then he will search Jerusalem with a candle, and the hidden things of darknesse shall be laid open, and the inventions of tongues shall be silent.

3. I am he that in an instant do raise up the humble mind to understand more reasons of the everlasting truth, then can be gotten by ten years studie in schools. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without contention of arguments. I am he that teacheth to despise earthly things, to lothe things present, to seek the

M everlast

everlasting, to delight in the things that are eternall, to fly honours, to suffer scandals, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing out of me, and above all things fervently to love me.

4. For one by loving me entirely, learned divine things, and spake wonders : he profited more in forsaking all things, then in studying subtilties. To some I speak ordinary things, to others, things more rare; to some I appear sweetly by signes and figures, but to some I reveal mysteries with much light. The voice of books is one, but it teacheth not all men alike. For I am the internall Teacher, I am the Truth, the teacher of the heart, the understander of thoughts, the setter forward of good words, distributing to every one according to my will.

CHAP. XLIV.

*Of not drawing outward things to
our selves.*

¶ **S**onne, in many things thou
oughtest to be ignorant, and e-
steem thy self as dead upon earth,
and as one to whom the whole
world is crucified. Thou must also
passe over many things with a deaf
care, and rather think of that,
which appertaineth to thy peace. It
is more profitable to turn thine eyes
from the sight of displeasing things,
and to leave unto every one his
own opinion, then to strive with
contentious words. If thou stand-
est well with God and considerest
his judgements thou shalt the more
easily yield to the will of others.

2. **O** Lord, to what an estate
are we come ! Behold, we bewail a
temporall losse, and for a little gain
we toil and spare no labour ; and
the spirituall damage of our soul is
forgotten, and hardly at length cal-
led to mind. That which little or

nothing profiteth, is alwayes remembred, and that which is chiefly necessary, is negligently passed over, because mans nature carrieth him to externall things; and unlesse he quickly return unto himself, he lieth drowned in them with delight.

CHAP. XLV.

That credit is not to be given to all men: and how prone man is to offend in words.

Help me, Lord, in my tribulation, for vain is the defence of man. How often have I been deceived, finding want of faith, where I thought it sure? And how often have I found faith, where I least expected it? It is vain therefore to trust in men; but the safety of the just, O Lord, is in thee. Blessed be thou, my God, in all things that befall us. We are weak and inconstant, quickly deceived, and soon changed.

2. Who is he, that is able so warily

warily to keep himself, that he never fall into any deceit or doubt? But he that trusteth in thee, O Lord, and seeketh with a pure heart, doth not easily fall; and if he fall into any tribulation, he is never so much inthrall'd, yet he shall quickly be delivered or comforted by thee. For thou wilt not forsake him for ever that trusteth in thee. A friend is rare to be found, that continueth faithfull in his friends distresse: but thou O Lord, thou alone art faithfull at all times, and there is none like unto thee.

3. O how wise was that holy soul that said, My mind is firmly settled and grounded in Christ! If it were so with me, then would not humane fear so easily trouble me, nor words move me. Who can foresee all things? Who is able to beware beforehand of future evils? If things even foreseen do oftentimes hurt us, how can things unlooked for choose but wound us grievously? But why did I not provide

wide better for my self, miserable wretch? Why also have I so easily given credit to others? But alas we are men, and God knoweth, weak and frail men, although by many we are reputed and called Angels. To whom shall I give credit, Lord? to whom but to thee? Thou art the truth that neither dost deceive, nor canst be deceived. And on the other side, every man is a liar, weak, unconstant, and subject to fall especially in words: and therefore we must not easily give credit even to that, which in outward shew seemeth at the first a certain truth.

4. O with how great wisdom hast thou warned us to take heed of men! And because the enemies of man are his familiar and domesticall acquaintance, not to trust, if one should say, Behold here, or behold there. I am taught to my cost, and I would to God I might thereby increase my care, and not my folly. Be wary, saith one, be wary; keep

keep to thy self what I tell thee :
and whilst I hold my peace , and
think it is secret, he cannot keep
that secret which he desired should
be secret, but presently discloseth me
and himself, and goeth his way.
From such tales and such improvi-
dent people protest me, Lord, that I
fall not into their hands, nor ever
commit such errors. Give me grace,
my God, to observe truth and con-
stancy in my words, and remove far
from me deceitfull tongue. What
I am not willing to suffer, I ought
by all means to avoid.

§. How good and quiet a thing
it is to be silent, and not to talk of
others, nor to believe all that is said,
nor easily to report what we have
heard; to lay ones self open to few;
always to look after thee, the be-
holder of the heart, not to be car-
ried about with every wind of
words, but to desire that all things
both within and without, be ac-
complished according to thy will
and pleasure. How secure is it for

he keeping of heavenly grace, to fly the sight of men ; and not to seek those things that seem to cause admiration abroad, but to follow that with all diligence, which bringeth amendment of life, and encrease of zeal.

6. To how many hath virtue known and over-hastily commended, been hurtfull ? How profitable hath grace been kept with silence in this mortall life, which is nothing but a perpetuall temptation, and a warfare ?

CHAP. XLVI.

Of putting our trust in God when evil words arise.

Sonne, be constant, and put thy trust in me. For what are words but words ? They passe through the air, but hurt not. If thou be guilty, determine willingly to amend thyself : if thou be innocent, resolve to suffer this willingly, at least for God. It is a small matter

ter to suffer sometimes a few words, if thou hast not yet the courage to endure stripes. And why do small matters go to thy heart, but for that thou art yet carnall, and regardest men more then thou oughtest? Because thou art afraid to be despised, therefore thou wilt not be reprehended for thy faults, and thereby seekest shadows of excuses.

2. But look better into thy self, and thou shalt see that the world yet liveth in thee, and a vain desire to please men. For when thou refusest to be humbled and reprov'd for thy faults, it is surely evident that thou art neither truly humble nor dead to the world, nor the world perfectly crucified to thee. But give diligent care to my words, and thou shalt little respect ten thousand words spoken by men. Behold, if all should be spoken against thee that could be most maliciously invented, what would it hurt thee, if thou sufferdest it to passe, and madest no reckoning at

all of it? could all those words
pluck as much as one hair from thy
head?

2. But he that hath not his heart
within him, nor God before his
eyes, is easily moved with every lit-
tle dispraise; when as he that trust-
eth in me, and trusteth not in his
own judgement, shall be free from
humane fears. For I am the Judge
and the discernor of all secrets. I
know how the matter passed, I
know him that offered the injury,
and him that suffereth it. From me
hath this word proceeded: this hath
happened by my permission, that
out of many hearts thoughts may
be revealed. I shall judge the guilty,
and the innocent; but by a secret
judgement I would before-hand try
them both.

3. The testimony of men often-
times deceiveth: my judgement is
alwayes true; it shall stand, and not
be overthrown. It is commonly
hidden and secret, and not known
in every thing, but to few; notwith-
standing

standing it never erreth, neither
can it erre, although to the eyes of
the foolish it seems not right. Men
ought therefore to return to me in
every judgement, and not to stand
in their own opinions. For the just
man will not be troubled whatsoe-
ver happeneth unto him from God:
and if any thing be wrongfully
brought forth against him, he will
not much care; neither will he vain-
ly be glad, if by others he be with
reason excused. For he considereth
that I am he that searcheth the
heart and reins, and do judge not
according to the outward face, nor
humane appearances. For that is of-
tentimes found culpable in my
sight, that in the judgement of men
is commendable.

5. O Lord my God, the just
Judge, strong and patient, thou
knowest the frailty and perversity
of man; be thou my strength, and
all my trust, for mine own confi-
dence sufficeth me not. Thou know-
est that which I cannot reach unto,
and

and therefore in every reprehension I ought to have submitted my self, and to have borne it patiently: vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I have failed herein, and give me again grace of greater sufferance. For thy bountifull mercy is more available to me for the obtaining of pardon, then my conceived justice for the defence of my hidden conscience. Although my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby justify my self; for if thy mercy be away, no man living shall be justified in thy sight.

CHAP. XLVII.

That all grievous things are to be endured for life everlasting.

Sonne, let not the pains dismay thee which thou hast undertaken for me, neither be thou discomfited for the tribulations which do befall thee; but let my promise strengthen and comfort thee in all events. I am able to reward

reward thee above all measure. Thou shalt not long toil here, nor alwayes be oppressed with grief. Attend a while, and thou shalt see a speedie end of thy evils. There will come an houre when all labour and trouble shall cease. Little and short is all that passeth away with time.

2. Do as thou doest; labour faithfully in my vineyard; I will be thy reward. Write, reade, sing, mourn, keep silence, pray, suffer crosses manfully: life everlasting is worthy of all these and greater combats. Peace shall come in the day which is known unto our Lord, and it shall not be day nor night, to wit, of this time, but everlasting light, infinite brightnesse, stedfast peace, and secure rest. Then thou shalt not say, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? nor crie, Wo be unto me, for that my dwelling in a strange countrey is prolonged! For death shall be thrown down, and health shall be without decay;

decay; no anxiety; blessed joy, sweet and glorious company

3. O if thou hadst seen the everlasting crowns of the Saints in heaven, and with how great glory they now rejoyce who in times past were contemptible to this world, and esteemed unworthy of life in self; truly thou wouldest presently humble thy self even unto the earth, and wouldest rather seek to be under the feet of all them, to have command so much as over one; neither wouldest thou desire the pleasant dayes of this life, but rather rejoyce to be afflicted for God, and esteem it thy greatest gain to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4. O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, and didst suffer them to enter into the depth of thy heart, how durst thou so much as once to complain! Are not all painfull labours to be endured for everlasting life? It is no small matter to lose or to gain the Kingdom

dome of heaven. Lift up thine eyes therefore unto heaven: behold I, and all my Saints with me, who in this world had great conflicts, do now rejoyce, now are comforted, now are secure: now do rest, and shall remain with me everlastingly in the Kingdome of my Father.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Of the everlasting day, and shortness of this life.

O Most blessed mansion of the heavenly City! O most clear day on the earth, which might obscure the sun, but the highest truth ever enlighteneth; day ever pleasant, ever secure, and never changing into contrary state! O that that day would once appear, and all this transitorall things were at an end! To the Saints it shineth gloriously with everlasting brightness, but to those that are Pilgrimes upon earth, it appeareth onely afarre off, and as it were through a glasse.

2. The

2. The inhabitants of heaven do know how joyfull that day is : but the banished children of Eve bewail the bitternesse and tediousnesse of this. The dayes of this life are short and evil , full of sorrow and anguish; where man is defiled with many finnes , incumbered with many passions , disquieted with many fears , filled with many cares , distracted with many curiosities , intangled with many vanities , compassed about with many errours , worn away with many labours , vexed with temptations , weakned with delights , tormented with want.

3. O when shall these evils be at an end ! When shall I be delivered from the miserable bondage of sinne ! When shall I think , O Lord , of thee alone ! When shall I perfectly rejoyce in thee ! When shall I be free from all impediments in true libertie , without all grief of mind and body ! When shall I have firm peace , peace secure

cure and without trouble, peace within and without, peace every way assured! O good Jesu when shall I stand to behold thee! When shall I contemplate the glory of thy Kingdome! When wilt thou be unto me All in all! O when shall I be with thee in thy Kingdome, which thou hast prepared for thy beloved from before all worlds! I am left a poore and banished man in the land of mine enemies, where there are dayly warres, and great misfortunes.

4. Comfort my banishment, assuage my sorrow; for my whole desire sendeth up sighes unto thee. For all is burdensome to me, whatsoever this world offereth for my comfort. I desire familiarly to enjoy thee, but I cannot attain unto it. I would gladly fix my heart to the things of heaven, but temporall cares and unmortified passions weigh me down. In mind I would be above all things, but to my flesh I am inforced to be subject against
my

my will. Thus unhappie man that I am, I fight against my self, and am become grievous to my self, whilst my spirit seeketh after the things that are above, and my flesh that which is below.

5 O what do I inwardly suffer, when in my mind I consider heavenly things, and presently my prayers a multitude of fleshly fantasies present themselves before me. My God, be not farre from me, part not in thy wrath from thy servant. Cast forth thy lightnings, and disperse them: send out thy darts, and break all the fantasies of my enemy. Gather my senses together unto thee, make me forget the things of this world: grant me grace to cast away speedily the fantasies of vices. Succour me with everlasting truth, that no vanity may move me. Come heavenly innocencie and let all impurities flee from thy face. Pardon me also, and mercifully forgive me as often as I think upon any thing else besides thee

thee in prayer. I truly confesse, that I am wont to be subject to many distractions: for oftentimes I am not there, where I do corporally stand, or sit, but rather there, whither my thoughts do carry me. Where my thought is, there am I: there is offence, as my thought, where my affection is. That quickly offered it self unto me, which is naturally delightfome, and by custome pleasing.

6 And for this cause, thou that art woth it self hast plainly said, Where thy treasure is, there is also thy heart. If I love heaven, I willingly think of heavenly things. If I love the world, I rejoyce at the felicity of the world, and grieve for the adversity thereof. If I love the flesh, I imagine oftentimes those things that are pleasing to the flesh. If I love the spirit, I delight to think of spirituall things. For whatsoever I love, thereof do I willingly speak, and heare, and carry home with me the forms and
repre-

representations thereof. O blessed is that man, that for thee, O Lord, forsaketh all creatures; that violently resisteth nature, and out of the fervour of spirit crucifieth the concupiscence of the flesh, that with a clear conscience he may offer sincere prayers unto thee, and be worthy of the company of Angelicall quires, all earthly things outwardly and inwardly being excluded.

CHAP. XLIX.

Of the desire of everlasting life, and how great rewards are promised to those that fight valiantly.

Sonne, when thou perceivest the desire of everlasting blisse to be given thee from above, and desirest to depart out of the Tabernacle of this body, that thou maist without shadow of any interchange behold my light; open thy heart, and receive this holy inspiration with thy whole

whole desire. Give great thanks to the heavenly goodnesse, that dealeth with thee so favourably, visiteth thee mercifully, stirreth thee up fervently, holdeth thee up powerfully, lest through thine own weight thou fall down to the vanities of the earth. Neither dost thou obtain this by thine own thought or endeavour, but by the onely favour of heavenly grace and divine bountie, that thou maist profit in virtue, and obtain greater humilitie, and prepare thy self to future battels, and endeavour to cleave unto me with the whole affection of thy heart, and serve me with a fervent desire.

3. Sonne, fire often burneth, but the flame ascenderth not up without smoke: so likewise the desires of some men are earnestly carried to heavenly things, and yet they are not free from temptation of carnall affection: and therefore it is not altogether purely for the honour of God that which they so earnestly request

request of him. Such is also oftentimes thy desire: which with such importunity thou presentest unto me. For that is not pure and perfect, which is infected and defiled with the love of thine own proper commoditie and interest.

3. Ask not that which is delightful and profitable to thee, but that which is grateful to me, and convenient to my honour: for if thou judgest aright, thou oughtest to preferre and follow my appointment, rather then thine own desire, or any desired thing. I know thy desire, and have heard thy often groanes. Now thou wouldst be in the freedome of the glorie of the Sonnes of God: now doth the everlasting habitation, and the heavenly Countrey full of joy delight thee, but this houre is not yet come: it is yet another time, towit, of warre, a time of labour and triall. Thou desirest to be filled with the chiefest good, but thou canst not attain it for the present.

I am

I am he, saith our Lord, expect
untill the Kingdome of God doth
come.

4. Thou art yet to be tryed upon
earth, and to be exercised in many
things. Comfort shall be sometimes
given thee, but abundant fulnesse
thereof shall not be granted. Take
courage therefore, and be valiant as
well in doing as in suffering things
contrary to nature. Thou oughtest
to put on a new man, and to be
changed into another man. Thou
must oftentimes do that which thou
wouldest not, and leave undone
that thou wouldest do. That which
is pleasing to others, shall go well
forwards: that which thou wishest,
shall not speed. That which others
say, shall be heard: what thou saist
shall be nothing regarded. Others
shall ask and shall receive: Thou
shalt ask and not obtain.

5. Others shall be great in the
praise of men, but of thee there
shall be no speech; to others this
or that shall be committed but thou
shalt

shalt be accounted fit for nothing. At this nature will sometimes repine, and it is much if thou endurest it with silence. In these and such like, a faithfull servant of our Lord is wont to be tried, how he can denie and overcome himself in all things. There is scarce any thing, wherein thou hast such need to mortifie thy self, as in seeing and suffering those things that are contray to thy will, especially when that is commanded, which seemeth unto thee inconvenient, or to little purpose. And for that thou being placed under authoritie darest not resist higher power, therefore it seemeth hard unto thee to walk at the beck of another, and to leave wholly thine opinion.

6. But consider, Sonne, the fruit of these labours, the end near at hand, and the reward all measure, and thou shalt receive no grief thereby, but great comfort of thy patience. For in regard of that
little

little of thy will, which now thou willingly forsakeſt, thou ſhalt alwayes have thy will in heaven. There thou ſhalt have all that thou wilt or canſt deſire; there thou ſhalt enjoy all good without fear of loſing it; there ſhall thy will be ever one with me: it ſhall deſire nothing, ſtrange or private; there no man ſhall withſtand thee, no man complain of thee, no man hinder thee, nothing come againſt thee: but all things deſired ſhall be there together preſent, and reſreſh thy whole affection, and fulfill it to the higheſt degree: there I will give thee glory for the reproch which here thou ſufferedſt; a garment of praiſe for former grief; for the loweſt place, a ſeat of an everlaſting Kingdome; there ſhall the fruit of obedience appear, the labour of repentance rejoyce, and humble ſubjection ſhall be gloriouſly crowned.

7. Now therefore bow thy ſelf with great humilitie under the hand;

hands of all , and regard not who said or commanded this ; but take great heed , that whether thy Superiour, or thy inferiour , or thine equall require any thing of thee , or do insinuate their desire, thou take it all in good part , and endeavour to fulfill it with a sincere intention. Let one seek this, an other that; let him glory in this, the other in that , and be praised a thousand thousand times ; but do thou neither rejoyce in this , nor in that, but in the contempt of thy self, and onely in my good pleasure and honour. This art thou to wish , that whether it be by life or death, God may be alwayes glorified in thee.

CHAP. L.

How a desolate person ought to offer himself into the hands of God.

LOrd God , Holy Father , thy holy name be now and for ever blessed ; because as thou wilt , so is it

who it done, and what thou doest, is
ake good. Let thy servant rejoyce in
thy thee, not in himself, nor in any
or thing else, for thou alone art the
g of true gladnesse, thou art my hope
fire, and my crown, thou art my joy
and my honour, O Lord. What
sin- hath thy servant, but what he hath
his, received from thee, even without
his, any defect of his? Thine is all that
ed a thou hast given, and whatsoever
ut do thou hast made. I am poore, and
not in labours from my youth: and
f thy sometimes my soul is heavy even
asure unto tears, sometimes also it is
ou to troubled in it self, by reason of pas-
life sions which rise against her.

2. I desire the joy of peace, I
glor- crave the peace of thy children that
are fed by thee in the light of com-
fort. If thou give peace, if thou in-
offer fuse holy joy, the soul of thy servant
ed. shall be full of heavenly sweetnesse,
and shall become devout in thy
praise: but if thou withdraw thy
thy self as very often thou art wont, he
r ever will not be able to runne the wayes
so is it

of thy commandments , but rather he boweth his knees , and knocketh his breast , for it is not with him, as it was yesterday , and the day before , when thy light shined upon his head , and he was protected under the shadow of thy wings, from the temptations which violently assaulted him.

3. O righteous Father, and ever to be praised, the hour is come, that thy servant is to be proved ! Behold Father , it is fit that in this hour thy servant suffer something for thee O Father worthy of eternal honour , the hour is come, which from all eternitie thou didst foreknow should come ; that for a short time thy servant should outwardly be oppressed , but inwardly live forever with thee : he should be a little despised , and humbled, and made as an abject in the sight of men , and much afflicted with passions and infirmities , that he may rise again with thee , in the rising of new light , and be clari-

fied

fied in heaven. Holy Father, thou hast so appointed it, and wilt have it so: and this is fulfilled which thy self hast commanded.

4. It is a grace and a favour to thy friend to suffer, and to be afflicted in the world for love of thee, how often soever, and by whomsoever thou permittest it to fall upon him. For in the world nothing cometh to passe, either without thy counsell, without thy providence, or without a cause why. It is good for me, Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy righteous judgements, and cast away all haughtinesse of heart and presumption. It is profitable to me, that shame hath covered my face, that I may rather seek to thee for comfort then to men. I have learned also hereby to dread thy inscrutable judgement, that afflictest the just with the wicked, but not without equitie and justice.

5. I give thee thanks, that thou hast not spared my sinnes, but hast

worn me away with bitter stripes, conso-
 inflicting sorrows, and sending hidde
 grief within and without. There are d
 is none under heaven that can will
 comfort me, but thou my Lord any
 God, the heavenly Physician of thee
 souls, that strikett and healest, on ea
 bringest down to hell and raisest expect
 up again: let thy correction be much
 upon me, and let thy rod instruct the ru
 me. accor

6. Behold, beloved Father, I and
 am in thy hands, I bow my self un- bette
 der the rod of thy correction: let none
 my neck and shoulders feel the 7
 stripes of thy chastisement, that thac
 my crookednesse may be conformed that
 to thy will. Make me a devout praise
 and humble disciple of thine, as most
 thou art wont well to do, that I cious
 may be readie at every beck of thy which
 divine pleasure. I commend my suffer
 self and all mine unto thee to be to th
 corrected. It is better to be cor- nor t
 rected here, then hereafter. Thou the h
 knowest all and every thing, and rant
 there is nothing hidden in the sible
 con-

conscience of man, which can be hidden from thee. Before things are done, thou knowest that they will happen, and hast no need that any should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things which are done on earth. Thou knowest what is expedient for my good, and how much tribulation is fit for purging the rust of my sinnes. Do with me according to thy desired pleasure, and despise not my sinfull life, better and more clearly known to none then to thee alone.

7. Grant me, O Lord, to know that which is to be known, to love that which is to be loved, to praise that which pleaseth thee most, to esteem that which is precious unto thee, to despise that which is contemptible in thy sight: suffer me not to judge according to the sight of the exteriour eyes, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the eares of ignorant men; but to discern of visible and spirituall things with a

true judgement, and above all things ever to search after thy good will and pleasure.

3. The senses of men are often deceived in their judgements; the lovers of the world are also deceived in loving onely visible things. What is a man the better, for that he is esteemed great by man? The deceitfull in exalting the deceitfull, the vain man in extolling the vain, the blind in commending the blind, the weak in magnifying the weak, deceiveth him, and doth verily more shame him, while he doth vainly praise him. For how much every one is in thy sight, so much he is, and no more.

CHAP.

CHAP. LI.

That a man ought to imploy himself in works of Humilitie, when strength is wanting for higher imployments.

Sonne, thou art not able alwayes to continue in the fervent desire of virtue, nor to persist in the high pitch of divine contemplation; but thou must sometimes of necessitie by reason of original corruption descend to inferiour things, and bear the burden of this corruptible life though against thy will. As long as thou carriest a mortall bodie, thou shalt feel trouble and heavinesse of heart. Thou oughtest therefore in the flesh oftentimes to bewail the burden of the flesh: for that thou canst not alwayes persevere in spirituall exercises, and divine contemplation.

2. It is then expedient for thee to flie to humble and exterior

N 5 works,

works, and to refresh thy self with good virtuous actions, to expect with a firm confidence my coming, and heavenly visitation, to bear patiently thy banishment, and the drynesse of thy mind, till I visit thee again, and deliver thee from all trouble. For I will make thee forget thy former pains, and enjoy inward quietnesse. I will lay open before thee the pleasant fields of holy Scripture, that with an enlarged heart thou maist begin to runne the way of my commandments. And thou shalt say, that the sufferings of this time are not worthy of the glorie to come, that shall be revealed in us.

CHAP. LII.

*That a man ought to esteem himself
unworthy of comfort, but rather
to deserve stripes.*

LOrd, I am not worthy of thy
comfort, nor of any spirituall
visitation, and therefore thou deal-
est

est justly with me , when thou leavest me poore and desolate. For though I could shed a sea of tears, yet I were not worthy of thy comfort. For (alas) I deserve nothing, but to be scourged and punished, in that I have grievously and often offended thee , and sinned in many things. All things therefore duly considered , I am not worthy even of the least comfort. But thou mild and mercifull God , who wilt not that thy works do perish , to shew the riches of thy goodnesse upon the vessels of mercy , even beyond his desert vouchsafest to comfort thy servant above humane measure. For thy comforts are not like to the vain words of men.

2. What have I done, O Lord, that thou shouldst bestow any heavenly comfort upon me? I remember not that I have ever done any good, but have been alwayes prone to sinne, and slothfull in my amendment. It is true , and I cannot denie
it.

it. If I should say otherwise, thou wouldst stand against me, and there would be none to defend me. What have I deserved for my sinnes, but hell and everlasting fire? I confesse in the truth of my heart, that I am worthy of all scorn and contempt, and it is unfit that I should be remembred amongst thy devout servants. And although I be unwilling to heare this, yet notwithstanding for the love of truth I will lay open my sinnes against my self that I may the better obtain mercie of thee.

3. What shall I say being guiltie and full of confusion? I can utter no other word but this, I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned: have mercy on me, pardon me, suffer me a little, that I may bewail my grief, before I go unto the land of darknesse, and be covered with the shadow of death. What dost thou require of a guiltie and miserable sinner, but that he be contrite and sorrowfull, and humble himself

self for his offences? In true contrition and humbleness of heart, is bred a hope of forgiveness; a troubled conscience is reconciled again, grace lost is restored, man is defended from future wrath, and God and the penitent soul meet together in an holy kiss of peace.

4. Humble contrition for sinnes is an acceptable sacrifice unto thee, O Lord, favouring much sweeter in thy presence then the perfume of frankincense. This is also the pleasant ointment, which thou wouldst have poured upon thy sacred feet: for thou never despisest a contrite and humble heart. There is a place of refuge, from the angry face of the enemy; there is amended, and washed away whatsoever elsewhere was polluted and defiled.

CHAP. LIII.

*That the grace of God is not given to
those that favour of earthly
things.*

Sonne, my grace is precious, it
suffereth not it self to be ming-
led with external things, nor earthly
conforts. Thou oughtest therefore
to cast away all hinderances of
grace, if thou desire to receive the
infusion thereof. Choose therefore
a secret place to thy self, love to
live alone with thy self, desire the
conversation of none ; but rather
poure out devout prayers unto God,
that thou maist keep thy mind
compunct, and thy conscience pure.
Esteem the whole world as no-
thing ; preferre my service before
all outward things : for thou canst
not attend unto me, and be de-
lighted also in transitory vanities.
Thou oughtest to sequester thy self
from thy acquaintance and friends,
and to keep thy mind deprived of
all temporall comfort. So the blef-
sed Apostle Peter required, that the
faithfull

faithfull of Christ should keep themselves as strangers and pilgrimes in this world.

2. O how great a confidence shall he have at the houre of death, whom no affection to any earthly thing detaineth in the world. But the weak mind is not yet capable of so retired a heart ; neither doth the fleshly person understand the freedom of a recollected mind. Notwithstanding if he will be truly spirituall, he ought to renounce as well those which are farre off, as those which are near unto him, and to beware of no man more then of himself. If thou perfectly overcome thy self, thou shalt with more ease subdue the rest. It is a glorious victorie to triumph over our selves. For he that keepeth himself subject in such sort, that his sensuality be subdued to reason, and reason in all things be obedient to me, he is truly a conquerour of himself, and Lord of the world.

3. If thou desire to mount unto

to this height of perfection, thou must begin manfully, and set the ax to the root, that thou maist pluck up and destroy thy hidden and inordinate inclination to thy self, and unto all private, and earthly good. Of this vice (that man too inordinately loveth himself) almost all dependeth, whatsoever is wholly to be overcome: which being once overcome and subdued, there will presently ensue great peace and tranquillitie. But for that few endeavour perfectly to die unto themselves, and to forsake themselves wholly, therefore they remain intangled in themselves, and cannot be lifted up in spirit above themselves, but he that desireth to walk freely with me, it is necessary that he mortifie all his inordinate affections, and not adhere unto any creature by private love.

CHAP.

CHAP. LIV.

*Of the different motions of Nature,
and Grace.*

Sonne, mark diligently the motions of thine own nature, and my grace; for in very contrary and secret manner these are moved, and can hardly be discerned but by him that is spirituall and inwardly enlightened. All men desire that which is good, and pretend some good in all their words and deeds; and therefore under pretence of good, many are deceived. Nature is deceitfull, and seduceth, intanglenth, and deceiveth many, and alwayes proposeth her self for her end; but grace walketh with great sincerity, and avoideth all shew of evil, pretendeth not deceits, and doth all things purely for Gods sake, in whom also she finally resteth.

2. Nature will not willingly die, nor be kept in, nor overcome, nor be subject to any, nor be subdued:

dued: but Grace laboureth to mortifie her self, resisteth sensuality, seeketh to be subject, is willing to be overcome, and will not use her own libertie: she loveth to be kept under discipline, and desireth not to rule any, but alwayes to live and remain wholly subject unto God, and for God is ready humbly to bow unto all men. Nature striveth for her own commoditie; and considereth what profit she may reap by another; but Grace considereth not what is profitable and commodious unto her self, but rather what is profitable to many. Nature willingly receiveth honour and reverence: but Grace faithfully attributeth all honour and glory unto God.

3. Nature feareth shame and contempt, but grace rejoyceth to suffer reproch for the name of Jesus. Nature loveth idlenesse, and bodily rest, but Grace cannot be idle, but willingly imbraceth labour. Nature seeketh to have those things

things that be curious and precious, abhorreth that which is mean and base; but Grace delighteth in plain and humble things, despiseth not course and mean, nor refuseth to wear that which is old and torn. Nature respecteth the things of this world, rejoyceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for losse, is moved with every little injurious word; but Grace thinketh on that which is everlasting, and cleaveth not to that which fadeth with time: she is not troubled with losse, nor exasperated with injuries, for that she hath placed her treasure and joy in heaven, where nothing perisheth.

4. Nature is covetous, and doth more willingly receive then give, she loveth proper and private things; but Grace is pittifull and liberall to all; avoideth singularitie, is content with a little, thinketh it happier to give then to receive. Nature inclineth to creatures, yieldeth to her own flesh, followeth vanities, and listeneth to discourses: but
Grace

Grace draweth unto God, and seeketh after virtues, renounceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth desires of the flesh, restraineth wandrings abroad, blusheth to be seen in publick. Nature is willing to have some outward comfort, wherein she may delight her senses : but Grace seeketh comfort in God alone, and delighteth above all visible things in the highest good.

5 Nature worketh all for her own gain and profit. she can do nothing freely, but for bestowed benefits : she hopeth to obtain either that which is equall, or better, either praise or favour, and covereth to have her works and gifts much esteemed : but Grace seeketh no temporall thing, nor asketh any other reward for her deserts then God alone, nor desireth more of temporall necessities, then what may serve her for the obtaining of everlasting glory.

6 Nature rejoyceth to have many friends, and kinsfolks, she glorieth

rieth of noble birth and descent, pleaseth the powerfull, fawneth upon the rich, applaudeth those that are like herself: but Grace loveth her enemies, & is not puffed up with multitude of friends, nor esteemeth place or birth, but where it is joyned with greater virtue; she rather favoureth the poore, then the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent, then the powerfull, rejoyceth in the simple, and respecteth not the deceitfull, exhorteth ever the good to labour for the better gifts, and by virtue to resemble the Sonne of God. Nature quickly complaineth of any want and trouble: Grace constantly suffereth all kind of need.

7. Nature turneth all things to her self, striveth and contendeth for her self: but Grace reduceth all to God, from whence originally they proceed: she ascribeth no good to her self, neither doth she arrogantly presume of her self: she contendeth not, nor preferreth her opinion

nion before others, but in every sense and understanding submitteth her self unto the eternall wisdom, and to the divine judgement. Nature coveteth to know secrets, and to heare news: she will appear abroad, and make proof of many things by the experience of her own senses; she desireth to be known, and to do those things, for which she may be praised and admired: but Grace careth not for hearing news, nor to understand curious matters, for that all this springeth from the ancient disorder of our corrupt nature; seeing nothing that is new, is durable upon earth. She teacheth therefore to restrain the senses, to avoid vain pleasing and ostentation, humbly to hide those things that are worthy of praise and admiration, and of every thing and every knowledge to seek profitable fruit, and the praise and honour of God: she will not have her self nor hers publickly praised, but desireth that God should be
blessed

bleſſed in his gifts, who of mere charitie beſtoweth all things.

8. This grace is a ſupernaturall light, and a certain ſpeciall gift of God, and the proper mark of the elect, and pledge of everlaſting ſalvation, which liſteth up a man from eatthly baſeneſſe to love the things of heaven, and of a carnall maketh him a ſpirituall perſon. How much the more therefore nature is depreſſed and ſubdued, ſo much the greater grace is infused, and the inward man daily by new viſitations more reformed, according to the Image of God.

CHAP. LV.

Of the corruption of Nature, and efficacy of divine Grace.

MY God, who of thy mere goodneſſe haſt created me to thy Image and likeneſſe, grant me this grace which thou haſt ſhewed to be ſo great, and ſo neceſſary to ſalvation, that I may overcome my wicked

wicked nature, which draweth me to sinne, and to the losse of my soul. For I feel in my flesh the law of sinne, contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive, to obey sensualitie in many things: neither can I resist the passions thereof, unless thy holy grace fervently infused into my heart, do assist me.

2. Thy grace, O Lord, and great grace is needfull, that nature may be overcome, which is ever prone to evil from her youth. For by Adam the first man, being fallen and corrupted by sinne, the penaltie of this stain hath descended upon all mankind, in such sort, that nature it self which by thee was created good, and without defect, is now accounted for vice, and for the infirmitie of a corrupted nature, for that the motion thereof left unto it self draweth to evil and abject things. For the little force which remaineth, is like a certain spark, lying hidden in ashes. This

ne s naturall reason it self, compassed
my about with great darknesse, still re-
w aining power to discern good and
of vil, and the distance between true
e, and false, although it be unable to
: fulfill all that it approveth, and en-
ns oyeth not now the full light of
r- truth, nor the former integritie of
do her affections.

3. Hence it is, my God, that ac-
nd cording to my inward man I de-
re light in thy law, knowing thy com-
er mandments to be good, just, and
or holy, reprovng also all evil and sin,
l- and do know that it is to be fled.
e- But in my flesh I serve the law of
ed sinne, whilst I rather obey sensua-
at lirie then reason. Hence it is, that
as I have a will to do good, but know
is not how to perform it. For this
he cause I often purpose many good
e, things, but for that I want grace to
n- help my infirmitie, for a light resi-
o- stance I go back and faint. I know
ce the way of perfection, and see
in clearly enough what I ought to do,
is but pressed with the weight of mine

own corruption, I rise not unto

4. O Lord, how needfull is thy
grace for me, to begin any good
work, to go forward, and to accom-
plish it. For without it I can do
nothing, but in thee I can do
things, when thy grace doth con-
fort me. O heavenly grace, without
which our own merits are of no
thing, and no gifts of nature are
beesteemed. Arts, riches, beautie
and strength, wit, or eloquence
of no worth without thee, O Lord
without thy grace. For gifts of na-
ture are common to good and evil
but the peculiar gift of the elect
grace and love, wherewith being
marked, they are esteemed worthy
of everlasting life. This grace
much excelleth, that neither the
of prophetic, nor the working of
miracles, nor any speculation, how
high soever is of any esteem with-
out it. Neither faith, nor hope, nor
other virtues are acceptable unto
thee without charity and grace.

5. O most blessed grace, that

maketh

to makest the poore in spirit rich in
 virtues, and the rich in many blef-
 sings, humble in heart, come down
 into me, replenish me in the morn-
 ing with thy comfort, lest my soul
 should faint with wearinesse, and
 wither away with drinesse of mind.
 beseech thee, Lord, that I may
 find grace in thy sight, for thy grace
 sufficeth, though other things that
 nature desireth be wanting. If I be
 tempted and vexed with many tri-
 bulations, I will not fear evils
 whilest thy grace is with me: she is
 my strength, she giveth advise and
 help, she is stronger then all ene-
 mies, and wiser then all the wise.

6. Thy grace is the mistresse of
 truth, the teacher of discipline, the
 light of the heart, the solace in af-
 fliction: she driveth away sor-
 row: she expelleth fear, she is
 the nurse of devotion, the fountain
 of tears. What am I without it,
 but a rotten piece of wood, and an
 unprofitable stalk onely meet for
 the fire? Let thy grace therefore

O 2 Lord,

Lord, alwayes prevent me, and follow me, and make me ever diligent in good works, through Jesus Christ thy Sonne. Amen.

CHAP. LVI.

*That we ought to denie our selves
and imitate Christ by the
Crosse.*

Sonne, look how much thou canst go out of thy self, so much must thou enter into me. As thou becomest void of all desire of external things, maketh inward peace; by the forsaking of our selves joyneth us internally to God. I will have thee learn the perfect leaving of thy self unto my will without contradiction and complaint. Follow me, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Without the way there is no going aright, without truth there is no knowledge, without life there is no living. I am the way which thou oughtest to follow, the truth which thou oughtest to trust, the life for which

and for which thou oughtest to hope. I am
the way which cannot lead amisse,
the truth which cannot erre, the
life which cannot end. I am a
most strait way, a supreme truth,
a true life, yea a blessed life, an un-
created life. If thou remain in
me, thou shalt know the truth,
and the truth shall deliver thee, and
thou shalt lay hold on everlasting
life.

2. If thou wilt enter into life,
keep the commandments: if thou
wilt know the truth, believe me. If
thou wilt be perfect, sell all and
follow me. If thou wilt be my Di-
sciple, deniethy self. If thou wilt
possesse a blessed life, despise this
present life. If thou wilt be exalted
in heaven, humble thy self upon
earth. If thou wilt reigne with me,
bear the crosse with me. For onely
the servants of the crosse find the
way of blisse and true light.

3. Lord Jesus, forasmuch as
thy way is narrow, strait and con-
temptible unto the world, grant

me grace to imitate thee in suffering willingly all worldly contempt. For the servant is not greater than his Lord, nor the Disciple above his Master. Let thy servant be exercised in thy holy life, for therein is the health and the true sanctification of my soul: whatsoever I read or heare besides, doth not recreate or delight me fully.

4. Sonne, now that thou knowest and hast read these things, happy shalt thou be, if thou fulfill them. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and I will love him, and will manifest my self unto him, and will make him sit with me in the Kingdome of my Father. Lord Jesus, as thou hast said and promised, so give me grace to obtain the favour, that it be fulfilled. I have received the crosse, I have received it from thy hand; and I will bear it, and bear it till death, as thou hast laid it upon me. Truly the life of a good religious

religious person is the crosse; and it
is a sure guide to heaven. It is now
begun, it is not lawfull to go back,
neither is it fit to leave that which
we have undertaken.

5. Let us then take courage,
my Brethren, and go forwards to-
gether; Jesus will be with us. For
Jesus sake we have undertaken
this crosse; for the love of Jesus
let us persevere in the crosse. He
will be our helper, who is our
guide and forerunner. Behold our
King goes before us, who also
will fight for us: let us follow him
cheerfully, let us not be dismayed,
but be ready to die with courage
in the battel, and let us not ble-
mish our glory by flying from the
Crosse.

CHAP. LVII.

That a man be not too much dejected, when he falleth into some defects.

Sonne, patience and humilitie in time of aduersitie are more pleasing to me, then much comfort and devotion in prosperitie. Why art thou grieved for every little trifle spoken and done against thee? Although it had been much more, thou oughtest not to have been moved. But now let it passe, it is not the first that hath happened, nor any new thing, neither shall it be the last, if thou live long. Thou art cheerfull enough, as long as no aduersitie happeneth. Thou canst give good counsel also, and canst strengthen others with thy words, but when any tribulation suddenly knocketh at thy doore, thou art destitute of counsel, and void of strength. ¶ See therefore thy great frailtie, which thou often provest in every small occasion. It is not-with-

withstanding permitted for thy good, when these and such like occasions befall thee.

2. Put it out of thy heart the best thou canst, and if it touch thee, yet let it not deject thee, nor trouble thee long: bear it at least patiently, if thou canst not joyfully. Although thou be unwilling to heare it and feelest in thy heart some motion of disdain, yet pacifie thy self, and suffer no inordinate word to passe out of thy mouth, which may be a scandall to the weak. The storm which now is raised shall quickly be appeased, and inward grief shall be asswaged by the return of grace. I do yet live; saith our Lord, and am ready to help thee, and to give thee greater comfort then before, if thou put thy trust in me, and callest devoutly upon me.

3. Be more patient, and prepare thy self to greater suffering. All is not lost, if thou feel thy self often afflicted, or grievously tempted.

Thou art a man, and not God: thou art flesh, not an Angel. How canst thou look to continue ever in the same state of virtue, when an Angel in heaven hath fallen, and the first man in Paradise lost his standing? I am he that do give healthfull comfort to them that mourn, and do raise up unto me those that know their own infirmity

4. Lord, blessed be thy sacred word, more sweet unto my mouth then the hony, and the honycombe. What should I do in these my so great tribulations and anguish, unless thou didst comfort me with thy holy, sweet, and heavenly speeches? What matter is it, how much, and what I suffer, so as I may at length attain to the haven of happinesse? Grant me a good end, grant me a happy passage out of this world. Be mindfull of me, my God and direct me the straight and ready way to thy everlasting Kingdome, Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. LVIII.

*Of not searching into high matters,
and into the secret judgements
of God.*

Sonne, beware thou dispute not of high matters, nor of the secret judgements of God, why this man is forsaken, and he assumed to so great grace: why also this man is so much afflicted and he so greatly advanced. These things exceed all humane power, neither can any reason or discourse of any man search out the judgement of God. When the enemy therefore suggesteth these things unto thee, or some envious people demand them of thee, answer that of the Prophet, Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgement is right. And again, The judgements of our Lord are true and justified in themselves. My judgements are to be feared, not to be discussed, for they are such as cannot be comprehended by the understanding of man.

2. In like manner I advise thee not to inquire, nor dispute of the rewards of the Saints, which of them is holier then the other, and which is greater in the Kingdome of heaven. These things oftentimes breed strife and unprofitable contentions: they nourish also pride and vain glory, from whence do usually spring envie and dissensions, whilst one will needs foolishly have this preferred, and the other, another. To desire to know and search out such things, is to no purpose; for I am not the God of dissension but of peace, which peace consisteth rather in true humilitie, then in exalting our selves.

3. Some are carried with zeal of affection, to love these, or those most: but this love is rather humane then divine. I have made all the Saints, and have given them grace: I have made them partakers of my glory. I know how to reward every one, I have prevented them in the benedictions of my sweetnesse.

I foreknew my beloved before the beginning of the world. I chose them out of the world ; they chose not me first. I called them by grace, I drew them by mercy, I led them through fundrie temptations. I have sent them great inward comforts, I have given them perseverance, I have crowned their patience.

4. I know the first and last : I embrace all with inestimable love. I am to be praised in all my Saints : I am to be blessed above all things, and to be honoured in every one, whom I have thus gloriously exalted, and predestinated without any precedent merits of their own. He therefore that contemneth one of the least of my Saints, honoureth not the greatest ; for that I made both the lesse and the greater : And he that dispraiseth any of my Saints, dispraiseth also me and all the rest. In the Kingdome of heaven, all are one by the band of Charitie ; they think the same,
they

they will the same, and are all knit together in one perfect band of love.

5. But yet (which is much more high) they love me more then themselves. For being ravished above themselves, and drawn out of the affection of themselves, they tend wholly unto the love of me, in whom also they rest, enjoying me with unspeakable glory. Nothing can put them back, nothing presse them down; for being full of everlasting truth they burn with the fire of unquenchable charitie. Let therefore carnall and earthly men, that can affect no other but private joyes, forbear to dispute of the state of Saints. They adde and take away according to their own fancies, not as it pleaseth the everlasting Truth.

6. There is in many great ignorance, specially in those that be slenderly enlightned, and these can seldom love any with perfect spirituall love. They are alwayes much
drawn

drawn by a naturall affection, and humane friendship to this man or to that, and according to the experience they have of themselves in their earthly affections, so they frame an imagination of heavenly things. But there is an incomparable distance between the things, which the imperfect imagine in their conceits, and those which are illuminated do see by revelation from above.

7. Beware therefore, my Sonne, that thou treat not curiously of these things, which exceed thy knowledge, but rather so apply thy endeavours, that thou must at least have the meanest place in the Kingdome of heaven. And if any one did know which of the Saints exceeded others in sanctitie, or is esteemed great in the Kingdome of heaven, what would this knowledge avail him, unlesse he should thereby humble himself the more in my sight, and stirre up his mind to praise my name with
greater

greater zeal. His labour is much more acceptable unto God, that thinketh of the greatnesse of his sinnes, and his want of virtues, and how farre off he is from the perfection of the Saints, then he that disputeth of their greatnesse. It is better to imitate the holy examples of the Saints, then to search their secrets with vain curiositie.

8. They are well, and right well contented, if men could content themselves and refrain from these vain discourses. They glory not of their own merits, for they ascribe no good unto themselves, but attribute all to me, who of my infinite charitie have bestowed my blessings upon them. They are replenished with so great love of my God-head, and so superabundant joy, that there is no glory nor happiness, that is or can be, wanting unto them. All the Saints how much the higher they be in glory, so much the more humble they are in themselves, and nearer and dearer

dearer unto me. And therefore it is written, That they did cast their Crowns before God, and fell down upon their face before the Lambe, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever.

9. Many inquire who is greatest in the Kingdome of God, that know not whether they shall ever be numbred there amongst the least. It is no small matter to be even the least in heaven, where all are great: for that all there shall be called, and shall be indeed the Sonnes of God. The least there shall be great among thousands; and the sinner of a hundred years shall die. For when the Disciples asked who was the greater in the Kingdome of heaven; they received this answer, Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdome of heaven. Who-soever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is greater in the Kingdome of heaven.

10. Wo

10. Woe be unto them that disdain to humble themselves willingly with little children. For the low gate or the Kingdome of heaven, will not give them entrance. And woe be to the rich, that have their comforts here, for whilst the poore enter into the Kingdome of God, they shall stand lamenting without. Rejoyce you that be humble: and you that be poore be you glad, for yours is the Kingdome of God, if you walk according unto truth.

CHAP. LIX.

That all our hope and trust is to be fixed in God alone.

Lord, what trust have I in this world? Or what is the greatest comfort, that all things under heaven do yield me? Is it not thou, my Lord God, whose mercies are without number? Where hath is been well with me without thee? Or when could it be ill with me,
when

when thou wert present ? I had rather be poore for thee, then rich without thee. I rather choose to be a pilgrime on earth with thee, then to possesse heaven without thee. Where thou art, there is heaven : and there is death and hell, where thou art not. Thou art my desire, and therefore it becometh me to send forth deep sighes from my heart, and crie and pray unto thee. For I have none to trust unto, none that can help me in time of necessitie, but thee alone, my God. Thou art my hope, and my trust ; thou art my comforter, and most faithfull unto me in all my distresses.

2. All men seek their own gain, thou onely seekest my salvation and my profit, and turnest all things to my good. Although thou permittest many temptations to assault me, and many adversities to befall me, yet thou ordainest all this to my good and profit, who art wont to prove thy beloved servants

wants a thousand waies: In which proof thou oughtest no lesse to be loved and praised, then if thou didst replenish me with heavenly comforts.

3. In thee therefore, my Lord God I put my whole hope and refuge, in thee I place my tribulation and anguish, for I find all to be weak and unconstant, whatsoever I behold out of thee. For neither can many friends avail, nor forcible helpers aid, nor wise counsellours give profitable answer, nor the books of the learned comfort, nor any wealth deliver, nor any secrets, or pleasant place defend, if thou thy self dost not assist, help, comfort, instruct and keep us.

4. For all things that seem to be ordained for the rest and solace of man, when thou art absent, are nothing, and do bring indeed no joy, nor comfort at all. Thou therefore art the end of all that is good, the light of life, the depth of wisdom: and the most forcible comfort of
thy

thy servants, is to trust in thee above all things. To thee therefore do I lift up mine eyes : in thee my God, the Father of mercies, I put my whole trust. Blesse and sanctifie my soul with thy heavenly blessings, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the seat of thy eternall glory : and that nothing may be found in the Temple of thy greatnesse, that may offend the eyes of thy Majestie. According to the greatnesse of thy goodnesse, and multitude of thy mercies, take pitie upon me, and heare the prayer of thy poore servant, who is farre exiled from thee in the land of the shadow of death. Protect and keep the soul of thy servant, amidst so many dangers of this corruptible life, and by the assistance of thy grace direct it in the way of peace, to the countrey of everlasting light. Amen.

THE FOURTH BOOK.

*A devout Exhortation unto the
blessed Sacrament.*

The voice of Christ.

COME unto me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you, saith our Lord. The bread which I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world. Take ye and eat, this is my body that shall be delivered for you. Do this in remembrance of me. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. The words which I have spoken unto you; are spirit and life.

CHAP.

C H A P. I.

*With how great reverence Christ
ought to be received.*

The voice of the Disciple.

THese are thy words, O Christ
everlasting Truth, though not
spoken all at one time, nor written
in one and the self-same place. Be-
cause therefore they are thine and
true, they are all thankfully and
faithfully to be received by me.
They are thine and thou hast spokē
them, and they are mine also, be-
cause thou hast spoken them for
my salvation. I willingly receive
them from thy mouth, that they
may be the deeper imprinted in my
heart. These devout words, so full
of sweetnesse and love, do stirre me
up, but mine own offences do
amaze me, and my impure consci-
ence driveth me back from the re-
ceiving of so great mysteries. The
sweetnesse of thy words doth en-
courage

courage me, but the multitude of my finnes doth oppresse me.

2. Thou commandest me to come confidently unto thee, if I will have part with thee: and to receive the food of immortality, if I desire to obtain everlasting life and glory. Come, saist thou, unto me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. O sweet and lovely word in the eare of a sinner, that thou, my Lord God, shouldst invite the poore and needie to receive thy most blessed bodie. But who am I, Lord, that I may presume to approach unto thee? behold the heavens cannot contain thee and thou saist, Come ye all unto me.

3. What meaneth this most pious benignity, and so loving invitation? How shall I dare to come, that know not any good in me, whereupon I may presume? How shall I bring thee into my house, that have so often offended thy most gracious countenance? The
Angels

Angels and the Archangels honour thee, the Saints and just men do fear thee; and thou saist, Come ye all unto me. Unlesse thou, O Lord, didst say it, who would believe it to be true? And unlesse thou didst command it, who would dare to come unto thee? Behold Noah a just man laboured a hundred years in the building of the Ark, that he might be saved with a few: and how can I in one houres space prepare my self to receive with reverence the Maker of the world?

4. Moses thy great servant, and especiall friend, made an Ark of incorruptible wood, which also he covered with most pure gold, to put the Tables of the Law therein: and I a rotten creature, how shall I so lightly dare to receive the Maker of the Law, and the giver of life? Solomon the wisest of the Kings of Israel bestowed seven years in building a magnificent Temple, in praise of thy name, and celebrated the feast of the De-

dication thereof eight dayes together : he offered a thousand peaceable sacrifices , and set the Ark in the place prepared for it , with the sound of trumpets , and joy ; and I the most unhappie and poorest of men , how shall I bring thee into my house , that can scarce spend one half houre devoutly ? and I would to God it were once almost one half houre in worthy and due manner !

5. O my God , how much did they endeavour to please thee , and alas how little is that which I do ? How short time do I spend , when I prepare my self to receive : I am seldome wholly recollected , very seldome altogether free from distraction ; and yet surely no undecent thought ought to appear in the presence of thy Deitie, nor any creature draw me unto it : for I am not to harbour an Angel , but the Lord of Angels.

6. And yet there is great difference between the Ark and the Reliques thereof,

thereof, and thy most pure body with his unspeakable virtues: between those legall sacrifices, figures of future things, and the true Sacrifice of thy body, the complement of all ancient Sacrifices. Why therefore do I not become more zealous in thy venerable presence? Wherefore do I not prepare myself with greater care to receive thy sacred gift, sith those holy ancient Patriarchs and Prophets, yea Kings also and Princes, with the whole people, have shewed so great zeal of devotion to thy divine service?

7. The most devout King David danced before the Ark of God with all his force, calling to mind the benefits bestowed in times past upon his Forefathers. He made Instruments of sundrie kinds, he published Psalmes, and appointed them to be sung with joy: himself also oftentimes played upon the harp. Being inspired with the grace of the holy Ghost, he taught

the people of Israel to praise God with their whole heart, and with pleasant voices every day to blesse and praise him. If so great devotion was then used, and such memory of divine praise before the Ark of the Testament, what reverence and devotion is now to be performed by me and all Christian people in the presence of this Sacrament, in receiving the most precious body of Christ?

8. O God the invisible Creatour of the world, how wonderfully dost thou deal with us! how sweetly and graciously dost thou dispose of all things with thine elect, to whom thou offerest thy self to be received in the Sacrament! O this exceedeth all understanding of man! This chiefly draweth the hearts of the devout, and inflameth their desire. For thy true faithfull servants that dispose their whole life to amendment, by this most worthy Sacrament, oftentimes receive great grace of devotion, and love of virtue.

10. O

10. O Admirable and hidden grace of this Sacrament, which onely the faithfull of Christ do know: but the unfaithfull, and such as are slaves unto sinne cannot conceive nor feel. In this Sacrament spirituall grace is given, and lost virtue is restored in the soul, and beautie disfigured by sinne returneth again. This grace is sometimes so great, that with the fulnesse of devotion, which is here given, not onely the mind, but the weak body also seeleth great increase of strength.

11. Our coldnesse and negligence surely is much to be bewailed and pittied, that we are not drawn with greater affection to receive Christ in whom all the hope and reward of those that are to be saved doth consist. For he is our sanctification and redemption; he is the comfort of passengers, and the everlasting fruition of Saints. It is much therefore to be lamented that many do so little consider

this comfortable myſterie, which rejoyceth heaven, and preſerveth the whole world. O blindneſſe and hardneſſe of mans heart, that doth not more deeply weigh the greatneſſe of ſo unſpeakable a gift, but rather cometh by the daily uſe thereof to regard it little or nothing.

12. For if this moſt holy Sacrament ſhould be celebrated in one place onely, and conſecrated by one onely Miniſter in the world; with how great deſire doſt thou think would men be affected to that place, and what eſteem would they have of ſuch a Miniſter of Almighty God, by whom they might enjoy the conſolation of theſe divine myſteries? But now there are many miniſters, and Chriſt is offered up in many places, that ſo the grace and love of God to man may appear ſo much the greater, how much the more this ſacred Communion is common through the world. Thanks be unto thee good Jeſu,

Jesu , everlasting Pastour of our souls , that hast vouchsafed to refresh us poore and banished men with thy precious body and bloud, and to invite us to the receiving of these mysteries with the words of thy own mouth, saying, Come unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

CHAP. II.

*That great goodnesse and charitie of
God is bestowed upon man , in
this Sacrament.*

The voice of the Disciple.

PResuming of thy goodnesse and great mercie, O Lord, being sick, I approach unto my Saviour , hungry and thirstie to the fountain of life, needie to the King of heaven, a servant unto my Lord, a creature to my Creatour, desolate to my mercifull Comforter. But whence is this to me, that thou vouchsafest to come unto me ? Who am I that

thou shouldest give thy self unto me? How dare a sinner presume to appear before thee? And thou, how dost thou vouchsafe to come unto a sinner? Thou knowest thy servant, and seest that he hath no good thing in him, for which thou shouldest bestow this benefit upon him. I confesse therefore my unworthinesse, and I acknowledge thy goodnesse; I praise thy mercie, and give thee thanks for this thy unspeakable charitie. For thou doest this for thine own goodnesse, not for any merits of mine, to the end that thy goodnesse may be better known unto me, thy charitie more abundantly shewed, and thy humilitie more highly commended. Since therefore it is thy pleasure, and thou hast commanded that it should be so, this thy bountie is also pleasing to me, and I do wish that my offences may be no hinderance unto it.

2. O most sweet and bountifull Jesu, how great reverence and thanks, with perpetuall praise, is due

due unto thee for the receiving of thy sacred bodie, whose worth and dignitie no man is able to expresse! But what shall I think of at this time, now that I am to receive this divine Sacrament, and to approach unto my Lord, to whom I am not able to give due reverence, and yet I desire to receive him devoutly? What can I think better, and more profitable, then to humble my self wholly before thee, and to exalt thy infinite goodnesse above me? I praise thee my God, and will exalt thee for ever: and I do despise, and submit my self unto thee, even into the depth of my unworthinesse.

3 Behold thou art the Holy of Holies, and I the skum of sinners! behold thou bowest thy self down unto me, who am not worthy so much as to look up unto thee! Behold thou comest unto me! it is thy will to be with me, thou invitest me to thy banquet, Thou wilt give me the food of heaven, and bread

of Angels to eat, which is no other truly then thy self, the lively bread, that descendest from heaven, and givest life unto the world.

4 Behold from whence this love proceedeth ! what kind of favour and benignitie is this which shineth upon me ! What thanks and praises are due unto thee for these benefits ! O how good and profitable was thy counsel, when thou ordainedst it ! How sweet and pleasant the banquet when thou gavest thy self to be our food ! How wonderfull thy work, O Lord, how powerfull thy virtue, how unspeakable thy truth ! For thou saidst the word, and all things were made; and this was done which thou commandedst.

5. A thing of great admiration, and worthy of faith, and surpassing the understanding of man, that thou, my Lord God, true God and Man, shouldest be exhibited unto us by the elements of bread and wine, and thy body worthily received

ceived should be the spirituall food of our soul. Thou who art the Lord of all things, and standest in need of none, hast pleased to dwell in us by means of this thy Sacrament: preserve my heart and body unspotted that with a chearfull and pure conscience I may often celebrate thy mysteries, and receive them to my everlasting health, which thou hast chiefly ordained and instituted for thy honour, and perpetuall memory.

6. Rejoyce, O my soul, and give thanks unto God for so noble a gift, and singular comfort left unto thee in this vale of tears. For as often as thou callest to mind this mysterie, and receivest the body of Christ; so often dost thou remember the work of thy redemption, and art made partaker of the merits of Christ. For the charitie of Christ is never diminished, and the greatnesse of his mercie is never lessened. Therefore thou oughtest alwayes to dispose thy self hereunto
by

by a fresh renewing of thy mind, and to weigh with attentive consideration this great mystery of thy salvation. So great, new, and joyfull it ought to seem unto thee, when thou comest to these holy mysteries, as if the same day Christ first descending into the wombe of the Virgin, were become man; or hanging on the crosse did suffer and die for the salvation of mankind.

CHAP. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

The voice of the Disciple.

BEhold, O Lord, I come unto thee, that I may be comforted in thy gift, and be delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, O Lord, hast prepared in thy sweetness for the poore. Behold in thee is all whatsoever I can or ought to desire: thou art my health, and my redemption, my hope; and

and my strength, my honour, and my glorie. Make joyfull therefore this day the soul of thy servant, for that I have lifted it up to thee, my sweet Jesus. I desire to receive thee now with devotion, and reverence. I do long to bring thee into my house, that with Zacheus I may obtain to be blessed by thee, and numbred amongst the children of Abraham. My soul thirsteth to receive thy bodie, my heart desireth to be united with thee.

2. Give thy self to me, and it sufficeth. For besides thee no comfort is availakle. I cannot be without thee, nor live without thy visitation. And therefore I must often come unto thee, and receive thee as the onely remedy of my health, lest perhaps I faint in the way if I be deprived of thy heavenly food. For so, most mercifull Jesus, thou once didst say, preaching to the people, and curing sundry diseases, I will not send them home fasting, lest they faint in the way. Deal thou therefor

therefore in like manner now with me, who hast vouchsafed to leave thy self in the Sacrament for the comfort of the faithfull. For thou art the sweet refectiō of the soul, and he that eateth thee worthily, shall be partaker, and heir of everlasting glory. It is necessary for me, that do so often fall and sinne, so quickly wax dull and faint, that by often prayers and confession, and receiving of thy sacred bodie, I renew, cleanse, and inflame my self, lest perhaps by long abstaining I fall from my holy purpose.

3. For man is prone unto evil from his youth, and unlesse this divine remedie help him, he quickly slideth to worse. This holy Communion therefore draweth back from evil, and comforteth in good. For if I be now so often slack and negligent when I communicate, what would become of me, if I received not this remedy, and sought not after so great help? Though every day I be not fit, nor well prepared

pared to communicate, I will endeavour notwithstanding at convenient times to receive the divine mysteries, and make my self partaker of so great a grace. For this is the onely chief comfort of a faithfull soul, whilest she wandereth from thee in this mortall body, that being mindfull of her God, she often receive her Beloved with a devout mind.

4. O wonderfull benignitie of thy mercie towards us, that thou, Lord God, the Creatour and giver of life to all spirits, dost vouchsafe to come unto a poore soul, and with thy whole Deitie and Humanitie to replenish her hunger, O happie mind and blessed soul, that is vouchsafed to receive thee, her Lord God, with devout affection, and in receiving of thee to be filled with spirituall joy! O how great a Lord doth she entertain! How beloved a guest doth she harbour! how pleasant a companion doth she receive! how faithfull a friend doth she

she accept ! how beautifull and noble a spouse doth she embrace ! She embraceth him who is to be loved above all that is beloved, and above all things that may be desired. Let heaven and earth and all their beautie be silent in thy presence. For what beautie and praise soever they have, it is received from thy bountie, and shall not equall the beautie of thy name, of whose wisdom there is no end.

CHAP. IV.

*That many benefits are bestowed
upon them that communicate
devoutly.*

The voice of the Disciple.

MY Lord God, prevent thy servant in the blessings of thy sweetnesse, that I may obtain favour, to approach worthily and devoutly to thy holy Sacrament: stirre up my heart unto thee, and deliver me from all heavinesse and sloth :
visit

visit me with thy comfort , that I may taste in spirit thy sweetnesse, which plentifully lieth hid in this Sacrament, as in a fountain. Give light also to my eyes to behold so great a mysterie, and strengthen me to believe it with undoubted faith. For it is thy work, and not mans power; thy sacred institution, not mans invention. For no man is of himself able to comprehend and understand these things, which surpasse the understanding even of Angels. What therefore shall I unworthy sinner, dust and ashes, be able to search and comprehend of so high and sacred mysterie ?

2. O Lord in sinceritie of heart, with a good and firm faith, and at thy commandment, I come unto thee with hope and reverence, and do verily believe, that thou art here present in the Sacrament. Thy holy pleasure is, that I receive thee, and by charitie do unite my self unto thee. Wherefore I have recourse unto thy Clemencie, and do
crave

crave thy speciall grace, that I may wholly melt in thee, and abound with love, and hereafter never admit any externall comfort. For this most high and worthy Sacrament is the health of the soul and bodie, the remedie of all spirituall sickness: by it my vices are cured, my passions bridled, temptations overcome or weakned, greater grace infused, virtue increased, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, and charitie inflamed and enlarged.

3. For thou hast bestowed, and still ofrentimes dost bestow, many benefits in this Sacrament upon thy beloved that receive it devoutly, O my God, the Protector of my soul, the strengthner of humane frailtie, and the giver of all inward comfort. Thou impartest unto them much comfort against sundrie tribulations, and liftest them up from the depth of their own baseness, to the hope of thy protection, and dost inwardly refresh and illustrate them with a certain new
grace,

grace, in such sort, that they who before Communion felt themselves heavie and indisposed, afterwards being strengtnened with heavenly meat and drink, do find in themselves a great change to the better. Which thou dost so dispose to thy elect, that they may truly acknowledge, and patiently prove, how great their own infirmitie is, and what benefit and grace they receive from thee. For they of themselves are cold, dull, and undevout; but by thee they are made fervent, cheerfull, and full of devotion. For who is there, that approching humbly unto the fountain of sweetnesse, doth not carry away from thence at least some little sweetnesse! Or who standing by a great fire, receiveth not some small heat thereby? Thou art a fountain alwayes full and overflowing, a fire ever burning and never decaying.

4. Wherefore if I cannot draw at the full out of this fountain, nor drink my fill, I will notwithstanding

ing set my lips to the mouth of this heavenly conduit, that I may draw from thence at least some small drop to refresh my thirst; to the end I wither not wholly away and utterly perish. And though I be not altogether celestially, nor so inflamed as the Cherubins and Seraphins, notwithstanding I will endeavour to apply my self to devotion, and dispose my heart to obtain some small spark of divine fire by humble receiving of this life-giving Sacrament. And whatsoever is hereunto wanting in me, good Jesu, most Blessed Saviour, do thou supply for me, most bountifull and gracious Lord, who hast vouchsafed to call us unto thee, saying, Come unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

5. I labour in the sweat of my brows, I am vexed with grief of heart, I am burdened with sinnes, I am troubled with temptations, I am intangled and oppressed with
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many evil passions, and there is none to help me, none to deliver and save me, but thou, O Lord, my Saviour, to whom I commit my self, and all mine, that thou maist keep me, and bring me to life everlasting. Receive me to the honour and glorie of thy name, who hast prepared thy Bodie and and Bloud to be my meat and my drink. Grant, Lord God, my Saviour, that by frequenting thy mysteries, my zeal and devotion may increase.

CHAP. V.

*Of the dignity of this Sacrament,
and Ministeriall function.*

The voice of Christ.

IF thou hadst angelicall puritie,
and the sanctitie of S. John Baptist, thou wert not worthy to receive, nor handle this Sacrament. For it is not within the compasse of the deserts of men, that man should
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consecrate and handle the Sacrament of Christ, and receive for food the bread of Angels. A great myserie, and great is the dignitie of the Ministers of God, to whom is granted that which is not permitted to the Angels. For Ministers alone rightly instituted in the Church have power to celebrate, and consecrate the bodie of Christ. The Priest is the Minister of God, using the words of God, by Gods commandment and appointment, but God is there the principall Authour, and invisible Worker, to whom is subject all that he pleaseth, and all that he commandeth doth obey.

2. Thou oughtest therefore to give more credit to God Almighty in this most excellent Sacrament, then to thine own sense, or to any visible signe. And therefore thou art to come unto this Myserie with fear and reverence. Consider attentively with thy self, and see what that is, whereof the Ministerie is delivered

delivered unto thee by the imposition of the hands of the Bishop. Behold thou art made a Priest, and consecrated to officiate; see now that in due time thou offer Sacrifice unto God faithfully and devoutly, and carry thy self so, as thou maist be without reproof. Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but art now bound with a straiter band of discipline, and art obliged to a more perfect degree of sanctitie. A Minister ought to be adorned with all kind of virtue, and to give example of good life to others. His conversation should not be according to the ordinarie and common proceedings of men, but like to the Angels in heaven, or to perfect men on earth.

3. A Minister is the Vicegerent of Christ, to pray humbly with a prostrate mind unto God for himself and the whole people, and know that he is placed as a Mediatour between God and the sinner. Neither ought he to cease from prayer till he

he obtain grace and mercie. When a Minister doth celebrate, he honoureth God, rejoyceth the Angels, edifieth the Church, helpeth the living, and maketh himself partaker of all good deeds.

CHAP. VI.

*An Interrogation of the exercise
before Communion.*

The voice of the Disciple.

When I weigh thy greatnesse, O Lord, and my unworthinesse, I tremble, and am confounded in myself. For if I come not unto thee, I sile from life; and if I unworthily intrude my self, I incurre thy displeasure. What therefore shall I do, my God, my helper, and my counseller in necessitie?

2. Teach me the right way, appoint me some exercise futable to this holy mysterie of sacred Communion. For it is good for me to know, how I should reverently and de-

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devoutly prepare my heart unto thee, for the profitable receiving of thy Sacrament, or for the celebrating of so great and divine a mystery.

CHAP. VII.

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Of the discussing of our own conscience, and purpose of amendment.

The voice of the Beloved.

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Above all things, the Minister of God ought to come to celebrate, handle, and receive this Sacrament with great humilitie of heart, and lowly reverence, with a full faith, and a Godly desire of the honour of the divine Majestic. Examine diligently thy conscience, and to thy power purge and cleanse it with true contrition, and humble confession: so as there may be nothing in thee, that may be burdensome unto thee, or that may breed in thee remorse of conscience, and
Q hinder

hinder thy free access to these heavenly mysteries. Repent thee of all thy sinnes in generall, and in particular bewail thy daily offences. And if thou hast time, confesse unto God in the secret of thy heart, all the miseries of thy disordered passions.

2. Lament and grieve, that thou art yet so subject to sensualitye, so addicted to the world, so unmortified in thy passions, so full of the motions of concupiscence, so unwatchfull over thy outward senses, so often intrangled with many vain fantasies, so vehemently inclined to outward things, so negligent in the interiour, so prone to laughter and immodestie, so hard to tears and compunction, so prompt to ease and pleasures of the flesh, so dull to strictnesse of life and zeal, so curious to hear news and see vain sights; so slack to embrace that which tendereth to thine own humiliation and contempt, so covetous of abundance, so niggardly in giving, so fast in keep-

ing.

ing, so inconsiderate in speech, so unbridled to silence, so loose in manners, so outrageous in deeds, so greedy to meat, so deaf to the word of God, so hastie to rest, so slow to labour, so watchfull to tales, so drowsie to watch in the service of God, so hastie to the end thereof, so inconstant in attention, so negligent in Prayer, so undevout in celebrating the Communion, so drie in receiving, so quickly distracted, so seldome wholly recollected, so suddenly moved to anger, so apt to take displeasure against another, so prone to judge, so levere to reprehend, so joyfull in prosperitie, so weak in adueritie, so often purposing much good, and performing little.

3. These and other thy defects confessed, and bewailed with sorrow, and great dislike of thine own infirmitie, make a firm purpose alwayes to amend thy self, and to go forwards in virtue. Then with full resignation, and with thy whole will

offer thy self up to the honour of my name, a perpetuall sacrifice in the altar of thy heart, faithfully committing thy bodie and soul unto me, that so thou maist also obtain favour to come worthily to offer sacrifice unto God, and to receive profitably the Sacrament of my bodie.

4. For there is no oblation worthy, nor satisfaction greater, for the washing away of finnes, then to offer up our selves unto God purely and wholly in the holy Communion. And when a man shall have done what lieth in him, and shall be truly penitent, as I live, faith our Lord, who will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, I will not remember his finnes any more, but they shall be all forgiven him, and fully pardoned.

CHAP. VIII.

*Of the oblation of Christ on the
Crosse, and resignation of
our selves.*

The voice of the Beloved.

AS I willingly offered up my self
unto God my Father, with my
hands stretched forth on the
Crosse, and my bodie naked for thy
finnes, so that nothing remained in
me that was not turned into a sacri-
fice for the appeasing of the divine
wrath: so oughtest thou also to of-
fer up thy self willingly unto me
daily, as a pure and holy oblation,
with thy whole force and desire, in
as heartie a manner as thou canst.
What do I require of thee more,
then that thou resigne thy self
wholly unto me? Whatsoever thou
givest besides thy self is of little ac-
count in my sight; for I seek not
thy gift, but thee.

2. As it would not suffice thee to
have all things whatsoever besides
me; so neither can it please me

Q 3 whatso-

whatsoever thou givest, if thou offerest not up thy self. Offer thy self unto me, and give thy self wholly to God, and thy offering shall be gratefull. Behold I offered up my self wholly unto my Father for thee, and gave my whole body & bloud for thy food, that I might be wholly thine, and thou remain mine. But if thou abidest in thy self, and dost not offer thy self up freely unto my will, thy oblation is not entire, neither shall the union between us be perfect. Therefore a free offering up of thy self into the hands of God, ought to go before all thy actions, if thou wilt obtain freedome and grace. For this cause so few become inwardly illuminated, and enjoy true libertie of heart, for that they do not resolve wholly to denie themselves. My saying is undoubtedly true, Unlessse one forsake all, he cannot be my Disciple. If thou therefore wilt to be mine, offer up thy self unto me with thy whole desires.

C H A P. IX.

*That we ought to offer up our selves,
and all that is ours unto God,
and to pray for all.*

The voice of the Disciple.

THine, O Lord, are all things
that are in heaven, & in earth. I
desire to offer up my self unto thee,
as a free oblation, and to remain al-
wayes thine. O Lord, in sinceritie
of my heart I offer my self unto
thee this day, in sacrifice of perpe-
ruall praise, to be thy servant for e-
ver. Receive me with this holy ob-
lation of thy precious body, which
in the presence of the Angels, invi-
sibly attending here upon thee, I
offer up this day unto thee, that it
may be to the health of my soul,
and the salvation of all thy people.

2. I offer unto thee, O Lord,
all my finnes and offences, which I
have committed in the sight of thee,
and thy holy Angels, from the day
wherein I first could Sinne, to this
Q 4 houre,

houre, upon thy holy altar ; that thou maiest consume and burn them all with the fire of thy charitie, and wash out all the stains of my finnes, and cleanse my conscience from all offences, and restore to me again thy grace, which I lost by sinne, forgiving me all my offences, and receiving me mercifully in the kisse of peace.

3. What can I do for my finnes, but humbly confesse and bewail them, and intreat alwayes for mercie without intermission ? I beseech thee, heare me in thy abundant mercie, when I stand before thee my God. All my finnes are very displeasing unto me. I will never commit them any more ; but I am sorry, and will be sorry for them as long as I live, and am readie to repent, and do any thing that may move thee to pardon them. Forgive me, O God, forgive me my finnes for thy holy names sake: save my soul which thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood. Behold

hold I commit my self unto thy mercie, I resigne my self over into thy hands. Do with me according to thy goodnesse, not according to my wickednesse, and manifold iniquitie.

4. I offer up also unto thee all whatsoever is good in me, although it be very little and imperfect, that thou maist amend and sanctifie it, that thou maist make it gratefull and acceptable unto thee, and alwayes perfect more and more that which thou hast begun, and bring me also, who am the slothfull and unprofitable creature, to a good and blessed end.

5. I offer up also unto thee all the godly desires of devout persons, the necessities of my parents and friends, my brethren and sisters, and of all those that are dear unto me, and that have done good either to my self or to others for thy love, and that have desired me to pray for them, and all theirs : that they all may receive the help of thy grace

and comfort, protection from dangers, deliverance from pain, and being freed from all evils, may joyfully give worthy thanks to thee.

6. I offer up also unto thee my prayers, especially for them who have in any thing wronged, grieved, or slandered me, or have done me any damage or displeasure; and for those also, whom I have at any time, grieved, troubled, and scandalized by words or deeds, wittingly or at unawares: that it may please thee to forgive us all our finnes, and offences, one against another. Take, O Lord, from our hearts all jealousy, all indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoever may hurt Charity, and weaken brotherly love. Have mercie, O Lord have mercie on those that crave thy mercie: give grace unto them, that stand in need thereof, and grant that we may be worthy to enjoy thy grace, and attain to life everlasting, Amen.

CHAP. X.

*That the holy Communion is not
lightly to be forborn.*

The voice of the Beloved.

THou oughtest often to have recourse to the Fountain of grace, and of divine mercie, to the Fountain of goodnesse, and of all pietie, that thou maist be cured of thy sinnes and passions, and be made more strong and vigilant against all temptations and deceits of the Devil: The enimie knowing the greatest profit and remedie to consist in the holy Communion, endeavoureth by all means and occasions to withdraw and hinder faithfull and devout persons from it.

2. Some when they purpose to receive the sacred Communion suffer greatest assaults of the Devil. For that wicked spirit (as it is written in Job) cometh amongst the Sonnes of God, to trouble them
with

with his accustomed malice and impietie, or to make them over fearfull and perplexed, that so he may diminish their affection, or by subtilie assaults take away their faith, to the end they may either altogether abstain from this divine food, or at least come unto it with lesse devotion. But there is no heed to be taken of his frauds and malicious suggestions, be they never so filthy and hideous, but all is to be turned back upon his own head. Thou oughtest to contemne and scorn him, miserable wretch, and not to omit the sacred communion for his assaults, and the troubles which he raiseth.

3. Oftentimes also an excessive care for the obtaining of devotion, and a certain anxietie for the making of thy Confession hindereth thee. Follow in these occasions the counsel of the wise, and put away all doubt and scruple; for it hindreth the grace of God, and overthroweth devotion. Omit not for every

every small vexation of the mind that happeneth to receive this holy Sacrament, but go presently to confesse thy finnes, and willingly forgive others whatsoever offences they have done against thee: and if thou hast offended any, humbly crave pardon, and God will willingly forgive thee.

4 What availeth it to delay confession of thy finnes; and to deferre receiving? Purge thy self with speed, spit out the venome presently, make haste to take a remedie, and thou shalt find it better, then if thou deferredst it long. If thou omittest it to day for this cause, perhaps to morrow some greater will fall out, and so thou maist be hindred a long time from these divine mysteries; and become more unfit. Stirre up thy self, and shake of all heavinesse and sloth with the greatest force and speed thou canst. For it profiteth nothing to continue long in disquietnesse and trouble of mind, and for dayly occurring

curing impediments to withdraw thy self from the Sacraments. Yea it hurteth very much to deferre Communion long, for it is wont to breed a great and dangerous dulnesse. Alas, some cold and dissolute people do willingly deferre the sacred Communion, lest they should be bound to greater watch over themselves.

5. O how little charitie and weak devotion have they that so easily omit the receiving of these holy mysteries! How happie is he and gratefull to God, who ordereth so his life, and keepeth his conscience in such purity, that he may be readie and fit to communicate every day, if it were convenient and might be done without note. If any one sometimes abstain of humilitie, or by reason of some lawfull impediment, he is to be commended for the reverence which therein he sheweth. But if it proceedeth of coldnesse, he must stirre himself up, and do what lieth in him, and God will

will prosper his desire, for the good will he hath to do it, which God doth chiefly respect.

6. And when any lawfull hinderance doth happen, he must alwayes have yet a good will, and loving desire to communicate, and so shall he not lose the fruit of the Sacrament. For a devout person may every day and houre profitably and without let receive Christ spiritually: and yet on certain dayes, and at time appointed he ought to receive Sacramentally with a reverent desire the body of his Redeemer, and rather seek the honour and glorie of God, then his own comfort. For he communicateth mystically and is invisibly fed, as often as he devoutly calleth to mind the mysterie of the Incarnation, and the Passion of Christ, and is inflamed with his love.

7. He that prepareth not himself, but when a feast draweth near, and when custome compelleth him thereunto, shall often be unprepared.

pared. Blessed is he that offereth himself up as a Sacrifice and burneth offering to our Lord, as often as he doth celebrate or communicate. Thou oughtest not to be tedious and troublesome to others, but to observe the common course according to the appointment of thy Superiours: and rather frame thy self to the profit of others, than to thine own devotion or desire.

CHAP. XI.

That the Body of Christ, and the holy Scriptures, are most necessarie unto a faithfull soul.

The voice of the Disciple.

O Most sweet Lord Jesu, how great is the delight of a devout soul that feastereth with thee in thy banquet, where there is no other meat offered to be eaten but thy self, her onely beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart. And verily it would be a
great

great comfort unto me, to poure out tears from the bottome of my heart in thy presence, and with devout Magdalene to wash thy feet with the tears of mine eyes. But where is this devotion? Where is so plentifull shedding of holy tears? Surely in the sight of thee and thy holy Angels, my whole heart should be inflamed and dissolve into tears for joy. For I enjoy thee in the Sacrament truly present, though darkened and in a shadow.

2. For to behold thee in thine own divine brightnesse, mine eyes would not be able to endure it, neither could the whole world stand in the clearnesse of the glory of thy Majestie. I do really enjoy and adore him, whom the Angels adore in heaven; but I, as yet for the time, in faith; they in his proper form, and without shadow. I ought to be content with the light of true faith, and to walk therein, untill the day of everlasting brightnesse break forth, and the shadows of

of figures passe away. But when that shall come which is perfect, the use of Sacraments shall cease. For the Blessed in heavenly glorie need not the remedie of Sacraments, who rejoyce without end in the presence of God, beholding his glorie face to face, and being transformed by his brightnesse into the brightnesse of the incomprehensible Deitie: they taste the Word of God made flesh, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaineth for ever.

3. Whilest I remember these thy wonderfull works, all spirituall comfort whatsoever becometh very tedious unto me: for that as long as I behold not my Lord openly in his glory, I make no account of whatsoever I see or heare in this life. Thou art my witnesse, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature give me rest, but thou my God, whom I desire to behold everlastingly. But this is not possible whilst I remain in this mortal

hen tall life. Therefore I must frame
my self to much patience, and sub-
mit my self to thee in all my de-
sires. For thy Saints also, O Lord,
who now rejoyce with thee in the
Kingdome of heaven, whilst they
lived, expected in faith and great
patience the coming of thy glory.
What they believed, I believe: what
they hoped for, I expect: whither
they are come, I trust I shall come
by thy grace. In the mean time, I
will go forward in faith, strengthen-
ed by the examples of the Saints: I
have also devout books for my
comfort, and for the guide of my
life, and above all these, thy most
holy Body for a singular remedie
and refuge.

4. For I perceive two things to
be chiefly necessarie for me in this
life, without which this miserable
life would be insupportable unto
me. Whilst I am kept in the prison
of this bodie, I acknowledge my
self to stand in need of two things,
to wit, food, and light. Thou hast
there-

therefore given unto me, weak creature, thy sacred Bodie for the refecti-
on of my soul and bodie; and
hast set thy word as a light unto
my feet: without these two I could
not well live. For the word of
God is the light of the soul, and
the Sacrament, the bread of life.
These also may be called the two
tables set on the one side and the
other, in the store-house of the holy
Church. One is the holy table,
containing the sacred bread, that is,
the precious body of Christ: the
other is of the divine law, contain-
ing holy doctrine, teaching true
faith, and certainly leading to the
part of the Temple within the
veil, where is the Holy of Holies.
Thanks be unto thee Lord Jesus,
light of everlasting light, for thy
table of holy doctrine, at which
thou servest us by thy servants, the
Prophets and Apostles, and other
Doctors.

5. Thanks be unto thee, Creatour
and redeemer of man, who to mani-
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feast thy charitie to the whole world, hast prepared a greater supper, wherein thou hast offered to be eaten, not the mysticall Lambe, but thine own most sacred Body and Bloud, rejoycing all the faithfull with thy holy banquet, and replenishing them to the full with thy heavenly Cup, in which are all the delights of heaven; and the holy Angels do feast with us, but with a more happie sweetnesse.

6 O how great and honourable is the office of Gods Ministers, to whom it is granted with sacred words to consecrate the Lord of Majestie, with their lips to blesse him, with their hands to hold him, with their own mouth to receive him, and to administer him to others! O how clean ought to be those hands, how pure that mouth, how holy the body, how unspotted the heart, in whom the Authour of purity so often entresth! Nothing but holy, no word but chaste and profitable ought to proceed from
his

his mouth, which so often receiveth the Sacrament of Christ.

7. Simple and chaste ought to be the eyes that are wont to behold the body of Christ ; the hands pure and lifted up to heaven , that use to handle the Creatour of heaven and earth. Unto the Priests especially it is said in the Law, Be ye holy , for that I your Lord God am holy.

8. Assist us , Almighty God, with thy grace , that we , who have undertaken the office of Priesthood , may serve thee worthily and devoutly in all purity, and with a sincere conscience. And if we cannot live in so great innocencie as we ought to do , grant us notwithstanding in due manner to bewail the finnes which we have committed , and in the spirit of humility , and sincere intention to serve thee hereafter with more zeal and devotion.

CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

*That he who is to communicate
ought to prepare himself with
great diligence.*

The voice of the Beloved.

I Am the lover of puritie, and the
giver of all sanctitie. I seek a pure
heart, there is the place of my rest.
Make readie and adorn for me a
great chamber, and I will make
with thee the Passeover for my Di-
sciples. If thou wilt have me come
unto thee, and remain with thee,
purge the old leaven, and make
clean the dwelling of thy heart:
shut out the whole world, and all
tumult of vices: sit like a sparrow
solitary upon the house-top, and
think of thy offences in the bitter-
nesse of thy soul. For every lover
prepareth the best and fairest room
for his beloved: and hercin is
known the affection of him that
entertaineth his beloved.

2. Know

2. Know thou notwithstanding, that the worth of no action of thine is able to make this preparation sufficient, although thou shouldest prepare thy self a whole year together, and think on nothing else but of my mercie and grace onely. Thou art suffered to come to my table, like a begger invited to dinner to a rich man, who hath nothing else to return him for his benefits, but to humble himself, and give him thanks. Do what lieth in thee, and do it diligently; not for custome, nor for necessity, but with fear and reverence, and heartie affection receive the bodie of thy beloved Lord and God, who vouchsafeth to come unto thee. I am he that have called thee, I have commanded it to be done, I will supplie what is wanting in thee: come and receive me.

3. When I bestow the grace of devotion on thee, give thanks to God: for it is given thee, not for that thou deservest it, but because I
have

have mercie on thee. If thou have it not, but rather feel thy self drie, continue in prayer, sigh and knock, and give not over unill thou obtainest some crumbe or drop of grace. Thou hast need of me, not I of thee, neither comest thou to sanctifie me, but I come to sanctifie and make thee better. Thou comest that thou maist be sanctified by me and united unto me, that thou maist receive new grace, and be stirred up again to amendment: Neglect not this grace but prepare thy heart with all diligence, and receive thy beloved into thy soul.

4. But thou oughtest not onely to prepare thy self to devotion before Communion, but carefully also to conserve thy self therein, after thou hast received the Sacrament. Neither is the carefull guard of thy self after lesse exacted, then devout preparation before. For a good guard afterwards is the best preparation thou canst make for the obtaining

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again of greater grace; because that mans mind becometh very indisposed, if he presently poure himself out to outward comforts. Beware of much talk, remain in some secret place, and enjoy thy God. For thou hast him whom all the world cannot take from thee. I am he, to whom thou oughtest wholly to give thy self, that so thou maist live hereafter, not in thy self, but in me, without all care.

CHAP. XIII.

*That a devout soul ought to desire
with her whole heart to be
united unto Christ in
the Sacrament.*

The voice of the Disciple.

HOW may I obtain this, O Lord that I may find thee alone, and open my whole heart unto thee, and enjoy thee as my soul desireth? And that not man may look upon me, nor any creatures

ture move me or respect me, but thou alone maist speak unto me, and I to thee, as the beloved is wont to speak to his beloved, and a friend to banquet with his friend. This I pray for, this I desire, that I may be wholly united unto thee, and may withdraw my heart from all created things, and more and more, by sacred Communion and often celebrating, learn to taste of heavenly and everlasting sweetnesse. O Lord God, when shall I be wholly united unto thee, and swallowed up by thee and altogether forgetfull of my self I thou in me, and I in thee! and so grant us both to continue in one.

2. Thou art my beloved, the choicest amongst thousands, in whom my soul hath taken pleasure to dwell all the dayes of her life. Thou art my peacemaker in whom is greatest peace, and true rest, without whom is labour, and sorrow, and infinite miserie. Thou art a hidden God, and thy counsel is not with the wicked, but thy

R 25 speech

speech is with the humble and simple of heart. O Lord, how sweet is thy spirit, who to the end thou mightest shew thy sweetnesse towards thy children, vouchsafest to feed them with the most delightful bread, which descendeth from heaven, and is full of all sweetnesse. Surely there is no other Nation so great that hath Gods approaching unto them, as thou our God art present to all thy faithfull, unto whom for their dayly comfort, and for the lifting up their hearts to heaven thou givest thy self to be eaten and enjoyed.

3. For what other Nation is there so famous, as the Christian people? or what creature under heaven so beloved as a devout soul, to whom God himself cometh to feed her with his glorious flesh? O unspeakable grace! O admirable favour! O infinite love, singularly bestowed upon man! But what shall I give unto our Lord in return of this grace, for so singular a charitie?

charitie? There is no other thing more gratefull that I am able to give, then to bestow my heart wholly on my God, and to unite it perfectly unto him. Then shall all my bowels rejoyce, when my soul shall be perfectly united unto God. Then he will say unto me, If thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee. And I will answer him, Vouchsafe, O Lord, to remain with me, and I will be with thee. This is my whole desire, that my heart be united unto thee.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the fervent desire of some devout persons to receive the Body of Christ.

The voice of the Disciple.

O How great is the store of thy sweetnesse, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee! When I remember some devout persons who come unto thy

Sacrament O Lord, with great devotion and affection, I am oftentimes confounded, and blush within my self, that I come so negligently and coldly to thy table of the holy Communion: that I remain so drie, and without spirituall motion or feeling, that I am not wholly inflamed in thy presence, my God, nor so earnestly drawn and moved, as many devout persons have been, who out of a vehement desire of receiving, and a feeling affection of heart, could not contain themselves from weeping, but with the desire both of soul and body they earnestly longed after thee, O God, the lively fountain; being not otherwise able to temper nor satisfie their hunger but by receiving thy body with all joy and spirituall greedinesse.

2. O most ardent faith of those persons, a probable argument of thy sacred presence! For they truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose heart burneth so
within

within them, whilst thou, O blessed Jesu, walkest with them. Such desire and devotion, so vehement love and fervencie is oftentimes farre off from me. Be mercifull unto me, good Jesu, sweet and bountifull Lord, and grant me thy poore needie creature to feel sometimes, at least in this holy Sacrament, a little cordiall desire of thy love, that my faith may be more strengthened, my hope in thy goodness increased, and that my charitie once perfectly inflamed, after the tasting of heavenly Manna, may never decay.

3. Thy mercie, O Lord, is able to give me the grace I desire, and to visit me in thy bounteous clemencie with the spirit of fervour, when it shall please thee. For although I burn not with so great desire as those that are so especially devoted unto thee, yet notwithstanding by thy grace, I desire to have this great inflamed desire, praying and craving that I may parti-

cipate with all such thy fervent lovers, and be numbred among them in their holy company.

CHAP. XV.

That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility, and deniall of our selves.

The voice of the Beloved

THOU oughtest to seek the grace of devotion instantly, to ask it earnestly, to expect it patiently and confidently, to receive it joyfully, to keep it humbly, to work with it diligently, and to commit the time and manner of this heavenly visitation to God, untill it shall be his pleasure to come. Thou oughtest chiefly to humble thy self, when thou feelest inwardly little or no devotion; and yet not to be too much dejected, nor to grieve inordinately for it. God often giveth in a short moment that which he hath long time denied:
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he giveth sometimes in the end that which in the beginning of prayer he deferred to grant.

2. If grace should be alwayes presently given, and at hand ever with a wish, it could not be well indured by a weak man. Therefore devotion is to be expected with good hope, and humble patience: yet impute it to thy self, and thy sinnes, when it is not given thee, or when it is secretly taken from thee. It is sometimes a small matter that hindreth and hideth grace from us, if it be to be called small, and not rather a great matter, that hindreth so great a good. And if thou remove this, be it great or small, and perfectly overcome it, thou shalt have thy desire.

3. For presently as soon as thou givest thy self to God, and seekest not this nor that, for thine own pleasure or will, but settlest thy self wholly in him, thou shalt find thy self united unto him, and quiet. For nothing will taste so well, and

please thee so much, as the will and pleasure of Almighty God. Whoever therefore with a sincere heart directeth his intention to God, and purgeth himself from all inordinate love, or dislike of any creature, shall be most fit to receive grace, and worthie of the gift of devotion. For our Lord bestoweth his blessings there, where he findeth his vessels emptie. And how much the more perfectly one forsaketh these basest things, and dieth to himself by contempt of himself, so much the more speedily grace cometh, and entreth in more plentifully, and lifteth up the heart that is free to a higher state of grace.

4. Then shall he see, and abound, and wonder, and his heart shall be enlarged, because the hand of our Lord is with him, and he hath put himself wholly into his hand for ever. Behold, so shall the man be blessed that seeketh Almighty God with his whole heart, and busieth not his soul in vain. This man ob-
taineth

taineth great grace of divine union, in receiving the holy mysteries, for that he regardeth not his own devotion and comfort, but above all he prizeth the honour and glory of God.

CHAP. XVI.

That we ought to manifest our necessities to Christ, and crave his grace.

The voice of the Disciple.

O Most sweet and loving Lord, whom I now desire to receive devoutly, thou knowest my infirmity and the necessity which I endure; with how many sinnes I am oppressed, how often I am grieved, tempted, troubled, and defiled. I come unto thee for remedy, I crave of thee thy heavenly comfort, and the ease of my pain. I speak to him that knoweth all things, to whom all my secrets are open, and who
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can onely perfectly comfort and help me. Thou knowest what it is, whereof above all things I stand in most need, and how poore I am in virtues.

2. Behold I stand before thee, poore and naked, calling for grace, and craving mercy. Refresh this thy hungrie and needy creature, give heat unto my coldnesse with the fire of thy love; give light unto my blindnesse with the brightnesse of thy presence. Turn all earthly things into bitternesse to me, all things grievous and contrary, into patience, all base and created things, into contempt and oblivion. Lift up my heart to thee in heaven, and suffer me not to wander upon earth; be thou onely sweet and delightful unto me from henceforth for evermore, for thou onely art my meat and my drink, my love and my joy, my delight and all my good.

3. O that with thy presence thou wouldest wholly inflame, burn, and
change

change me into thee, that I might be made one spirit with thee by the grace of inward union and melting of fervent love! Suffer me not to go from thee hungrie and drie, but deal mercifully with me, as thou hast oftentimes dealt wonderfully with thy Saints. What marvell if I should be wholly inflamed by thee, and die in my self, sith thou art fire burning and never decaying, love purifying the heart, and enlightning the understanding.

CHAP. XVII.

Of fervent love, and vehement desires to receive Christ.

The voice of the Disciple.

With great devotion and burning love, with most heartie affection and fervour I desire to receive thee, O Lord, as many Saints and devout persons have desired thee, when they received thy Sacrament, who were most pleasing unto thee

thee in holinesse of life, and most fervent in devotion. O my God, my everlasting love, my whole good, my happinesse without end, I would gladly receive thee with the most vehement desire, and worthy reverence, that any of the Saints ever had or could feel.

2. And although I be unworthy to have all those feelings of devotion, yet I offer unto thee the whole affection of my heart, as if I alone had those most sweet inflamed desires : yea whatsoever also a devout mind can conceive & desire, all that, with greatest reverence and most inward affection, I offer and present unto thee. I wish to reserve nothing to my self, but freely and most willingly to sacrifice my self and all mine unto thee, my Lord God, my Creatour and my Redeemer, I desire to receive thee this day with such affection, reverence, praise, and honour, with such gratitude, worthinesse, and love, with such faith, hope, and purity,

city, as thy most blessed Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary received, and desired thee, when she humbly and devoutly answered the Angel, who declared unto her the mysterie of thy incarnation, and said, Behold the hand-maid of our Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy word.

3. And as thy blessed Fore-runner, the most excellent amongst the Saints, John Baptist, cheerfully leaped with joy of the holy Ghost, whilst he was yet shut up in his mothers wombe; and afterwards seeing Jesus walking amongst men, humbling himself very much, said with devout affection, The friend of the Bridegroom that standeth and heareth him, rejoyceth with joy for the voice of the Bridegroom: so I also wish to be inflamed with great and holy desires, and to offer my self up to thee with my whole heart. Wherefore I offer also and present unto thee the joyes, fervent desires, excesses of mind, spiritual illuminations,

illuminations, and heavenly visions of all devout hearts, with all the virtues and praises exercised, and to be exercised, by all creatures in heaven and earth, for my self, and all such as are commended to me in prayer, that by all thou maist be worthily praised and glorified for ever.

4. Receive, my Lord God, the affections of my heart, and desires, which I have to give thee, infinite praise and thanks, which according to the measure of thy unspeakable greatnesse are due unto thee. These I yield thee, and desire to yield thee every day and moment: I do intreat and invite all the heavenly spirits, and all thy devout servants to give thanks & praises together with me.

5. Let all People, Tribes, and Tongues praise thee, and magnifie thy holy name with great joy, and fervent devotion, and let all that reverently and devoutly celebrate thy most high Sacrament, and receive it with full faith, find grace,
and

and mercie at thy hands, and pray
humbly for me sinfull creature.
And when they shall have obtained
their desired devotion and joyfull
union, and depart from thy sacred
heavenly table well comforted and
marvelously refreshed, let them
vouchsafe to remember my poore
and needy soul.

CHAP. XVIII.

*That man be not a curious searcher
of this Sacrament, but an hum-
ble follower of Christ sub-
mitting his sense
unto faith.*

The voice of the Beloved.

THOU oughtest to beware of cu-
rious and unprofitable search-
ing into this most profound Sacra-
ment, if thou wilt not sink into the
depth of doubt. He that is a search-
er of Majestie shall be oppressed
by glory. God is able to work
more then man can understand. A
pious

pious and humble inquiry of truth is tolerable, so he be alwayes readie to be taught, and do endeavour to walk in the sound paths of true doctrine.

2. Blessed is that simplicitie, that forsaketh the difficult wayes of questions, and goeth on in the plain and assured path of Gods Commandments. Many have lost devotion, whilst they would search after high things. Faith and sincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of understanding, nor the depth of the mysteries of God. If thou dost not understand, nor conceive those things that are under thee, how shalt thou be able to comprehend those that are above thee? Submit thy self to God, and let thy sense be subject to faith, and the light of knowledge shall be given thee in that degree, as shall be profitable and necessary for thee.

3. Some are grievously tempted about faith and the Sacrament: but this is not to be imputed to them
but

but rather to the enemy. Do not regard nor dispute with thy thoughts, neither do thou give answer to the doubts moved by the enemy, but believe the word of God, believe his Prophets, and the wicked Serpent will flie from thee. It is oftentimes very profitable to the servant of God to suffer such things. For he tempteth not Infidels and sinners, whom he already securely possesseth, but he sundrie wayes tempteth and vexeth the faithfull and devout.

4. Go forward therefore with a sincere and undoubted faith, and come to the Sacrament with unfeigned reverence, and whatsoever thou art not able to understand commit securely to Almighty God. God deceiveth thee not: he is deceived that trusteth too much to himself. God walketh with the simple, revealeth himself to the humble, giveth understanding to little ones, openeth the senses to pure minds, and hideth grace from the
curi-

curious and proud. Humane reason is weak, and may be deceived, but true faith cannot be deceived.

5. All reason and naturall search ought to follow faith, not to go before it, nor impugne it. For faith and love do chiefly excell, and work in a hidden manner in this most blessed and excellent Sacrament. God, who is everlasting, and of infinite power, doth great and inscrutable things in heaven and in earth, and there is no searching out of his wonderfull works. If the works of God were such as might be easily comprehended by humane reason, they were not to be called wonderfull, and unspeakable.

F I N I S.

